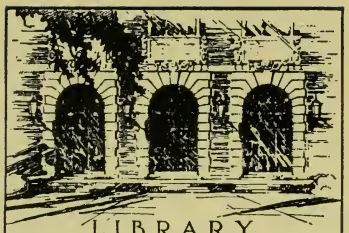

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THE

MOUNTAIN

DECAMERON.

BY JOSEPH DOWNES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET
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THE

MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE DOOMED FAMILY.

CHAPTER II.

The affectionate sister felt that Nest had imposed on her a fearful task. Either she must abet the delusion practised on her brother, supposing the generous scruples of Nest overcome; or she must break his heart by the disclosure. Nothing less than some fierce tragedy of over goaded patience and passion could be expected from Nest's persisting in refusal of his hand, at this late stage of their attachment. Here was a triple dilemma. After long perplexity, she proposed to Nest that she should disclose the truth to her brother. Instantly the weeping

girl, ceasing to weep, viewed her with looks of fury mixed with terror—"I knew, *I knew* how it would be!" said she—"*this* is your promised secresy! *this* your love for me—your pity!—Now hear me! Your brother *now* thinks me every thing pure, untainted, and delicate, that his own pure and beautiful thoughts do love—and I am almost blest and happy in being only *thought* such by him—then let me *die* happy if I cannot *live* so! Will you deny me *that?*—I swear if you *do*, Winny, *if you do*—oh, you will not? but if *you do* blacken me in his dear eyes, if you make me one shade less white than he now fancies me—spotted wretch tho' I am!—I will not only die and owe my death to you—but I fear, I fear, no life will be safe within reach of my mad despair, not your own, not even *his*—his dear one! Promise me but to keep my secret, and I will leave all to your mercy. Say I may marry him, and I *will*—say I ought not, and I will die—but oh! keep my secret, keep my secret! Alive or dead, keep my secret!"

Violence of various emotions, shame, and terror, and regret for having been surprised into the disclosure, altogether stopped her utterance, but her countenance, and her posture, continued to supplicate, while she stood drooping dumb. The sister took perhaps the most pru-

dent course. She broke the cruel news to Septimus—but with such a true picture of the poor girl's piteous agony, as not only bound him by his own feelings to secresy, but at the same moment that it set his heart to a freezing distance from its object, set it a'bleeding for her, with all the pity of fondness.

Nor did the love-taught nobleness of her repugnance to marry him under a delusion, which she could so safely have done, want its due admiration. Unhappy Septimus! His feelings found no vent in speech, his sudden pain's fury—for he had long felt himself as her husband—no object on which it could be spent to relieve his bursting bosom. So covering his face with his hands, he only muttered, "Say no more, *this is misery!*" and hurried to his chamber, to throw himself on his bed. It presently occurred to him that his first interview with Nest would surely betray his knowledge of her fall, and the worst was to be feared from her desperation in learning the fate of her secret. He flew to his sister, charged her to invent a plausible excuse for his sudden leaving home, during Nest's short absence at a neighbour's house, and took horse instantly, resolved to wrestle with his new feelings in solitude. Oxford, the scene of his happiest hours, became the haunt of his misery.

There, revolving his singular state of feelings in his mind, he bethought himself of ascertaining what would be the conduct of another if subjected to such a trial. There was a countryman of his who had been his friend and of the same college, Jesus (the usual resort of Welsh students). To him therefore he related the whole story, as not attaching to himself, but to an acquaintance, not omitting the strange adventure of the young and wretched mother, and her misery under the powerful passion she had conceived, and the consciousness of her unworthiness. With a careless air relating the perplexity, as mere matter of chit-chat, he thus elicited an opinion from his old intimate on what course an honourable mind might adopt—to marry, or not to marry? Without staying to record the result, which his conduct on his return will of course inform the reader, suffice it to say, that, after a fortnight's absence, his meeting with Nest did not betray the new painful sensation he could not but be enduring. Reflection had at least taught him self-command. The generous sister Winifred had most studiously cheated the unhappy girl into full confidence that her secret remained buried in her own bosom; thus fulfilling, as she best could, the conflicting duties of the entrusted

friend and the good sister, though a breach of faith was unavoidable toward one or the other party. Nest meanwhile had submitted her future course wholly to the decision of her confidant. To her sisterly delicacy she committed the long agitating question of her marrying the brother, which she perhaps would have pined to death ere she could have decided for herself.

That strong attachment which grows so much faster and firmer between persons living in very lone situations, than among the denizens of cities, had long bound the kindhearted widow to the girl of her brother's not unwise though humble choice, as to a sister. Hence the moment of her brother's return and consequent near approach of the issue of this embarrassment, was almost as agitating to herself as her own expected judgment was to Nest. Her wishes went all with the latter, yet she suppressed them carefully toward him, except that a palliating hint about the extreme suffering poor Nest had endured all to herself so long, or a remark on her childish years when led astray, would escape her lips.

By whatever process of mind he had arrived at his conclusion, whether by philosophy or rebellion against it, the decision of Septimus was evident before he spoke, by the still fond at-

tentions he evinced towards Nest. But when his lips formally announced to the widow that the gentle sufferer and true penitent was still to be her sister-in-law, was *not to die* (for that she knew too well was the real question depending, from every thing that could betray a darkly resolved mind, by terrible talkings of her bedfellow in her sleep, about modes of death, about deadly instruments, poisoning, &c.) she wept for joy, dumb awhile, then breaking out into a rapture of praise, with difficulty suppressed till his unbiassed resolve was declared.

A painter might have been happy to catch the moment of the next interview between those two females, humble as they were, and one homely and little pictorial of figure. The widow had practised much address in concealing all connection between the brother's return, and her own verdict on the case; nor did time ever seem to lag so slowly to her as in the interval it was requisite to allow, toward that concealment. Any one might have seen, what that artist might have caught, the life or death anxiety which darkened in the depressed yet wild eye of the one, the checked delight of conferring happiness and saving life, which half peeped through the grave yet tenderly piteous eyes of the other. Poor Nest maintained how-

ever a decent composure, frequently lifting her eyes a moment to read her doom from the look of her judge before she uttered it, as they trifled and paused in the awkwardness of commencing the subject. But no sooner did an increasing smile on Winny's face appear, precluding the short but expressive mode of bidding her be blest, consisting in only two affectionate words, and a stroke of the other's deadly pale cheek, "*Sister* Nest! *sister, vach!*" tell her fate, than, with an hysteric sob, and a wild opening of her eyes on the glorious bright morning, as if not seen before, she threw herself on her friend's neck, and before she could uphold her, slid down fainting at her feet. The ending of the terrible suspense which had kept her heart from rest so long, was of itself a shock—so novel was the feeling of relief from her long solitary bosom-burthen! the idea of being married to Septimus, *with the approval of his best friend,* made conscious of her life's one fault!

But the struggle between the lover and the man of refined feeling was still preying on the very life of the heart of Septimus. To sit in judgment on his own doom for life, act as umpire between his heart and his honour, was a fearful trial. His friend had indeed decided on the side of love. He had en-

tered into his disguised narrative with interest, indeed, with an emotion which Septimus could not account for, but his opinion was for marrying, in such a case; but he perhaps was a man of grosser mind than our retired lover. The sanction of such a sentiment might indeed prove balm to his wounded pride, but to the romantic lover's wounded mind it brought no healing. Thus, as soon as the hurry of spirits, produced by travel, and the joy of returning to her, and finding her well, had subsided, disappointment began to prey upon his soul, and a strange revolting impression grew upon him that it was no longer *her* that he returned to, her of the virgin-passion, the unsullied purity of fame and mind! The romance of his hopes, of the mutual *first love*, was at an end. The *poetry* of his first sweet adventure of the heart, was changed into something too like the prose of friendship with its calmer comforts. The drop and blank was too sudden and violent to be easily borne. It brought a melancholy along with it, of blighted hopes and disenchanted fancy, so that parting of life itself seemed to him, in some moods, less dismal than the departure of this its sweetest dream.

The result of this new pining state, anxiously hidden from her, produced what was perhaps

the most happy event that a philosopher, could he have commanded it, could have devised for his cure—a dangerous illness. Fatigue, with anxiety and depression, and rejection of due nourishment, threw him into a fever, which quickly assumed typhoid symptoms.

To the sleepless tossings of distress, to the aching head and light-loathing eye, what is beauty, what is grace? Sickness, the dull fiend, is a bitter enemy to love, but sworn *ally* of friendship, disenchants the witchery of a flashing eye, *mortalizes* the angel. The loveliest arm is that, which with the fondest anxiety, is bent into the most easy pillow, for heart no less than head; and the loveliest eye, that which with the softest piteous regard, scrutinizes ours, not for the response of the kindled soul within it, but for such prognostic of recovery, or death, as its beam or its mere dull pearl-white might afford to the gravest physician. In the angel of his dream, in the goddess of his idolatry, all the palsied vision of the sick man's heavy eye can any longer behold, or even desire to behold, is a *nurse!* This Septimus found in his fallen mistress, a nurse devoted, terrified, suspending her soul's every hope on his every turn of countenance, weeping, watching, a sister-sufferer in his every pain;

and finding the soft *reality* of so great a blessing, it was natural he should afterwards cease to pine for the *ideal,* or at best a bliss of a week's duration.

From high raptures of hope, from the dreamings of young love, this was a lucky though painful mode of restoring the pining madman to the calm realities of life, and its wants. The abrupt shifting of the scene which had so grieved his heart, by shewing the mortal frailty of his angel, (what young mistress of a young man enamoured is not angelic?) now shewed him something better; a mere woman indeed, but one prepared to live and die for him, antedating before marriage the most trying and exalting and most inestimable of a wife's virtues, prepared "in sickness and in health till death them should part," to sooth, to bless, to uphold in dying, and to ensure him at least one true mourner by his grave. As Winifred loved her brother (an only one) very dearly, he now fulfilling the part of a father to her fatherless children, domesticated under his roof, the tender attentions of the young woman (to which she attributed his recovery) laid a debt of gratitude on her also, which she repaid in the most generous and delicate service possible. She devoted all her spare minutes to reconcile the

still dejected girl to herself, in restoring her self-esteem so long and early lost, and all this incidentally as it were in common talk. She would remember every instance of a good and respected wife in the country, who might in very early years have once fallen a prey to a seducer; and dwell on the after life of such wife with praise, and but touch on the fault with a pitying regret. Nor let those unacquainted with Welsh society *among the mountains* (for to this sphere I limit my assertion) smile at this picture of delicacy in a farmer's family; among the secluded agriculturists who have amassed money by their primitive modes of life and pastoral habits, we often find the second generation really urbane:—some education, with habits of patriarchal sobriety, joined to the influence of grand and pensive scenery on the heart, produce much of the effect of polite breeding, without its corruption, as I have many times witnessed with admiration. A singular suavity, with extreme shyness, is remarkable in many of the great sheep-breeders, to which class old Morris belonged. But where the individual is the first who has risen above the sphere of a labourer for hire, by his own industry (as was the case of old Morris), much churlish insolence of prosperous barbarism is

found, in place of that gentle pensiveness of reserve, which, when it softens into the ease of familiarity, is so pleasing to the chance inmate of a mountain farm, for a night or rainy day.

To return from this digression, the same feeling anxiousness to reassure the too sensitive mind of the "White Stranger," which the sister thus exhibited, became the rule of the brother's conduct on his recovery. Strolling about the beautiful ravines and grassy hollows of his native hills, with his future wife on his arm, Septimus seemed happy as ever, and assured of her constancy, her consent, *now* no longer regretted a little delay which allowed time for the effect of his gentle art of comforting by stealth. If sometimes, in such a sweet walk, his old dream of "lips never breathed on" would revive in his lulled forgetfulness of heart's ease, it did indeed shoot a pang like a loathsome viper's sting seen and felt in the same moment, when the painful reality came back, and he almost saw in fancy on those lips and that white beauty, the impress of another's fulsome kiss! But then reason stepping into his cure, told him that at such a child's age and under such circumstances, he might almost as reasonably love her less, for that some licentious being of his own sex had some time

folded her actual infancy in an embrace, which only the letcher's own secret viciousness rendered other than innocent. Then she shewed such a flow of spirits for days, which he knew to arise solely from his recovery, and her consequent relief from a deadly anxiety; she was so much more at ease in that happiness of her fondness, that the beauty of her heart shone through her person, in doating eyes resting on him, till they filled with tears, in weeping pleasure at the view of his restored appetite, as he ate; and love's thousand little betraying signs; and he forgot the long past stain of those outward beauties, charmed with the stainless sweetness of those within. Septimus was a real lover of nature, and a poet by instinct. Hence, as they wandered in the warm sunset dingles, or on mighty banks of sheepwalk, no object was too humble from which to draw fancies illustrating that new art he was practising for his mistress's comfort, though his eagerness in disclaiming his former romantic sentiments, about first love, and marriage, a little astounded her very often; yet, as she had no suspicion of the cause of his feigning, the change, however wonderful, was to her most delightful.

Seeking some watercresses in the brook, and some of the herb called *Robin-run-the-hedge*

by the country people, for his sister, who was unwell, while Nest was picking those he ran to gather a beautiful wild flower nodding on its stalk, "Yours is the finest prize, though mine's the gaudiest," said he; "I act like a foolish lover in my pursuit, you like a wise husband in yours."

"How do you make out that?" she said laughing.

"Why *I* look only to the *outward* beauty, and *you* to the inward virtue of the plant. Before I was so ill, *I* looked at you as a spring flower, a hyacinth, or a daffodil that has had the first kiss of the sun after the frowning of all winter; but now I know your finer qualities. A lover, *well*, is like a florist who gloats on the lovely flower of a plant for its mere beauty, too dazzled with that to think of anything else; but the lover *sick* is like an herbalist, who will also be pleased with the flower, but values the plant and even the bright blossom tenfold more for the healing virtue he knows to reside in its root."

"And would you compare my heart to an ugly little bulbous root? That's the bluntness of an honest *husband*, at least, Septy *bach!* so my poor breast's the dirt it grows in, I suppose? Thank ye, Septy!"

"A virgin heart in a virgin form," had been the *summum bonum* of the heart's felicity, like the "mens sana in corpore sano" of philosophers, to our young lover, as we have seen. Septimus knew enough of woman's heart to pierce the secret of hers. He understood well that the secret poignant pain she had been enduring so long, mainly depended on regret that she could not, like other happier girls, present her lover with that he so ardently desired; not that her heart had ever known a previous passion, for she was truly an infant victim. Therefore his every art was now employed in belying his own romance of wishes—a pious fraud—and he succeeded. Nest grew satisfied that her Septimus had really renounced his former fastidiousness, and that in yielding her hand and heart, she would be not only crowning his utmost hopes in semblance, but in reality.

The selfishness of men is too intense to allow of their understanding that extacy of generosity which a woman feels in blessing her first love. But Septimus could conceive it at least, and with equal generosity thus laboured to assure her, that he *was* entirely so blest. How true is that saying, that virtuous actions bring their own reward! By his thus for ever pouring balm into that secret wound, which he knew

was bleeding in her bosom, that "fatal remembrance" of one shame, he gradually healed that festering in his own; under the painful knowledge of it, he became a convert to his own delusion practised on her, till he really believed he could receive even *her child* into his house, after marriage, without pain, in the event of his some time confessing to his privity, and her desiring the indulgence.

On a brightly-glorious morning, the happy Septimus Morris of Pen y Coed was married to Nest Lewis, at the church of Llanlifni, Carnarvonshire. The love of privacy natural to the young man was so far overcome by solicitation of neighbours in that truly primitive Welsh vale, as to yield to some of those singular sports that constitute the *ex-official* form of a Cambro-British wedding. The turmoil of the "bidding," however, the rude frolic and chase and capture of the bride, revolted the strong sense and delicacy of both their minds. It was proposed for an hour or two of evening to get up a dance on the lake's edge, give a supper to a few intimates, and partially comply with the old Welsh customs, which Septimus loved at his heart, rather because they were *old* than from any esteem for them as sports.

But Nest, however happy, had still a due of

grief unpaid; and in the still noon of that summer day, she stole an hour to bid farewell in thought to her forsaken, unknown child, with many tears. Her heart was susceptible of all a mother's tenderness in spite of that desertion of her offspring, which an over-mastering emotion, strong as death, had made her guilty of. This occasion, though seeming the birth-day of a new life of virtue and wedded love, had also its awe and sadness; for of late she had meditated on re-seeking her fatal first home, in the event of her finally renouncing the hand of Septimus; and an aching curiosity for ever hovered round the unseen, unknown fruit of her early error. But now, this entering on her new state seemed the final cutting off from her child; and as she mused in the solemnity of the wild Alpine region alone, her conscience smote her for being happy, and she sunk on her knees in a recess of rock, to implore God's pardon for her crime of abandoning it, though she had full knowledge that it would be provided for by the wealthy father.—"Mercy! pardon! My child that I have abandoned, look mercifully down upon it, Thou who hast permitted me, unworthy, this happiness! Although *I* must never look on it more, forsake it not *Thou*, O, just God!" Such was her

prayer, with her eyes streaming and upturned. Superstition is ever the concomitant of intense emotion of the darker kind. From that moment all future intercourse with her child was interdicted for life, under a penalty, to her worse than life's sacrifice, the privity of her husband to her frailty! Thus the tender remorse of the *mother* suddenly changed into the terror of the *wife*, and she prayed again.—"Yet, searcher of all hearts! Thou who seest how mine now yearns towards that wretched little being, whether on earth or in heaven, in pain or in joy, still, still keep it *from* me! Though I burst in that cruel ignorance of my baby's lot, do not blast me with its sight, to come like a sword of flame betwixt me and my dear husband! Grant me a sign, a sign, oh, Heaven! as answer to my question; *Will my Septimus ever know my fatal secret?* It was the wind whispered, nothing else! Oh that there were indeed seers and witches, black art or fair, by which I could be satisfied! Shall I live and die under that mask of white, which now makes him love me dearly? Shall I be cherished, be mourned when I die, like any other virtuous wife by my soul's own Septy? Oh, that little terrible witness, *still* living, *still* growing, not far off! what, if it should find me

out, and hail me 'mother'? Alas! I feel I could hate wickedly my own! Why have I done this rash thing? Why have I married and deceived my noble benefactor? Well, well! I 'm weary of myself even this day, even *this!* Grant me but this, dread God! in the very instant of time when the discovery shall be at hand, strike me dead! turn me into a corpse prostrate on the spot! yea, *him* too; even him, my dear love, strike dead that moment, not to look upon me dead in my shame! Oh, selfish! oh, cruel! Lord God! keep it from my eyes, from my husband's eyes; from my very memory, if it be possible; keep it from my death-bed, keep it from my grave!"

Damps, forced out by her agony, stood on her fine white expanse of forehead, and tears no longer came to her relief. But, presently, nature and a bright nuptial day recalled her from this strange sort of trance. The vast and silent mountains almost meeting, silver-lined with sunny torrents, their many falls mingling into one solemn music; the high green convex of the lofty sheep-walk, making one solitude with the bending blue of the summer sky above it, in which the sun rode alone without a cloud; the languid deliciousness of the pastoral valley beneath, with its white homes far apart, yet

sounding lullingly with baby-voices, and bleatings, and bark of distant sheep-dogs, while luscious clover exhaled its sweets basking in the sun; all these formed a mighty circle of holy serenity, within which (benevolent God himself the great magician) no foul spirit of man's bosom could long intrude unchastised. Nest, once more at peace with herself, gave a purer, more natural tear to her forsaken child, or its ghost, and resigned her fate into the hands of Him who had chastened her for a child's weakness by years of woman's shame and remorse, and a distracting kind of misery.

The evening of the scholar's wedding-day was annoyed by more bustle and merry-making than he had anticipated. It happened to be the time of the vacation at Oxford, and, as almost all the students who come from Wales enter Jesus College, several of his cronies were now at home with their families, and made a point of visiting Nant Lyfni for a sight of the bride.

CHAPTER III.

THE curious custom of the *bidding* at Welsh weddings, with its after-singularities, is by no means obsolete in the Principality. A traveller frequently meets in the *Welshly* districts, what he would imagine to be huntsmen in full chase, and such they are; but the flying prey, instead of a hare or fox, proves to be a fair girl, often pale with alarm, mounted behind a male rider, who rides away with her, with no less disregard to her personal comfort or safety, than if he were a giant of the "olden time" bearing off "fair dame" to his castle. A disorderly cavalcade of pursuers keeps up close behind, with total overthrow of all the laws of the road. Though the bridegroom put his *veto* on these equestrian "perils" of marriage, *before* marriage, he complied with some of the less boisterous forms, especially from having read in Tacitus that account of the wedding ceremonies of the ancient Germans, which nearly describes those of the ancient and modern Welsh.

The Gwahaddor, or "Bidder," had been duly

despatched with his wand of peeled willow, garlanded with ribbands, to which Septimus would add flowers, up and down all that delightful valley, from the village of Llanlyfni, quite up to that of Bedd-Gelert at the other extremity, to read an invitation to the wedding. The party of young men, who on these occasions act the parts of disputants against the bridegroom, disputing his right to his fair prize, and endeavouring to force her from him, are called, "Gwyr o wysgi oed," or "men of the sprightly age," and it is common for a mock enemy, or real one, mixed in the crowd of them, to gall the happy man it is their assigned task to abuse, with some open or covert scandal applicable to his past life, these sort of Saturnalia affording free vent for malice under the guise of jocular frolic. Though the chase had not taken place, many of the young men, headed by two or three of those rusticating Oxonians, formed themselves into this phalanx, and resolved to make up by wordy conflict and *baiting* of the truant scholar, who had taken up with a rustic fellowship among mountaineers, instead of an academical one, what they had missed of more robust exercise, and maintain, by activity of tongue at least, their right to that specific appellation of 'sprightly.'

The surprise of the better educated was great, at the almost noble appearance of the bride, whom, as a servant girl and stranger vagrant, they had expected to find a ridiculous mate for the refined and classical student. Her peculiarity of fortune seemed to have only touched her lofty cast of beauty with an affecting mournfulness—a light but constant cloud, which regularly broke away before the turned eye of her husband, or received the beautifying sweetness of her smile.

An indescribable something of propriety, far more charming than any *charms* in the common sense of that word, which marks the happy conjunction of a manly mind with woman's heart and tenderness, in some females, redeemed her in the shortest intercourse from all imputation of vulgarity.

The evening was one of perfect serenity in high summer,—and in few countries can a spot be pointed out which is more deliciously congenial to that time of the day and year, than that surrounding the farm-house of Septimus. Reflecting the pastoral banks, sloping quite up to the pinky-hued clouds of sunset, and the groups of dancing rustics on the dry sod of the sides, lay glassy and already half in shadow, the lakes of Llynneau Nantle, divided by a

narrow isthmus, along whose turf sheep were seen passing, white, from one side to the other, every one double, with his unbroken shadow. Under a mountain called Cader, lurks a ruin (in its olive-hued sobriety of tint) of an ancient house, where Edward the First is said to have spent much time while in Wales, allured by the deep retirement and beauty of the place. An orchard—that *summum bonum* of a rural life's appendages—straggled old and grotesque near the farm of Pen y Coed, and among the writhing trunks, under its fine shade, the wedding dinner had been spread. But now, the day having closed, a few, with the young couple, sate down to supper in a little kind of arbour, so thickly wattled with growing boughs that it formed a leafy room, to which the fancy of the scholar had affixed a glass door, for a view of the lakes. But the greater part of those not yet retired remained drinking cwrw and mead, a favourite Welsh beverage, in the orchard. In the Welsh wedding of the true old-fashioned character—the wordy war of the party pretending to rob the bridegroom of his prize, is a sort of field for the wits of the company to be exerted in; and, as has been hinted before, malice has often as much share in the dialogue as wit. Brawls have been sometimes the consequence. I have

heard of a fatal rencontre betwixt the lover and a rustic enemy of his in a crowd of the champions, who taunted him with some old scandal prevalent against him as having stolen a sheep, by incessant *bleatings* without speaking a word. The friends of Septimus availing themselves of this last opportunity of mirth, now left their drinking, to form themselves into this little band of besiegers, and under covert of a darkish night of brief moonlight, to practise at least the oral freaks of the *Gwyr o wysgi oed*, and vent some of the eloquent spirit now more rampant under full potations. So all crowding round the "hermitage," as Septimus had named his verdant room, where were only his sister and two more at table, each made his speech through the glass or the thickly matted foliage curtained within for this occasion. The chief mirth consisted in the endeavour of the taunted bridegroom to recognize his insulter by his voice, or what glimpse of his face he could catch through the glass of the rude door.

In many instances he detected his enemy, and retorted by some smart hit, which, by personality, at once told his detection and revenged the mock affront. Nest, whose habitual gaiety rarely broke into laughter, laughed

heartily at some of these skirmishes, in which the practised invention of the imaginative scholar, shone forth in her husband. At last the voice, however, seemed to produce less pleasant emotions, when it came startingly close through the fence, directly behind her seat. It was one of real or feigned hollowness, and spoke a *Latin* quotation bearing indirectly on the peculiar lot in marriage of Septimus, which he believed to be confined to his own bosom. "*That's* an Oxonian by the Latin," said he, "but I don't know the voice. My two *chums* have been gone this long time." Though startled at first, he soon laid the scoff to the account of a chance hit, and sat striving for an apt responsive quotation, when, turning his fond gaze on his wife, he saw the very paleness of death overspreading cheeks, lips, even down into her bosom, where the handkerchief, from the heat and recent exercise was a little opener than usual, so that her countenance and whole appearance struck him like that of another, and one ready to drop in a deadly swoon. The whole was like an optical illusion, for her returning smile was so ready, and her look, under his, so vivacious, that he doubted his own vision; and as a finer red came mantling that moment, driving before it all that ghastly pale he saw,

or fancied, by the dim taper, he did not even tell his alarm. The voice again spoke more loudly: "*You that know my voice, come to me, or I will come to you!*"

"Who the devil spoke then, and what does he mean?" Septimus said, partly to himself; "do you *know* the voice, my love?"

A face was now laid close against the glass, facing Nest, who presided at the rustic repast. At the bare fancy of her being ill, in that pallidness, her husband had drawn her close to him as they sat near, and she had hid her face on his bosom; so that, whatever was its look *now*, it was hidden from him: but he could distinctly feel her heart beat suddenly quicker as she buried her face in that manner, shrinking from that duskily presented at the glass for a moment and no more; and its quickness increased, and its force of beat, so as to become actually audible even to him. "That pedant fool, whoever he is, frights you, my love, with his ugly face and screech-owl voice! I never heard such a voice; he makes it sound as from a tomb." Going out in anger, quite weary of these fooleries, Septimus found two or three neighbours very stupid with drink, round the arbour, but none answering to the description of person—some one of his Oxford banterers, which he expected to find. It

should have been told however, that, on his rising to go out, his young wife caught his coat as if by an instinctive desperation of fear or repugnance at his going, and held him back a minute, still her face downcast and invisible to him. "Stay!" was all she uttered. But Septimus, in his irritation, perceived not the fierce impulse that dictated the action and the word, whatever it might be, and broke away from her. On his return she sate erect indeed, and fixed her large eyes full on him, as if ostentatiously open and undaunted of front, but there was a dreadful kind of transfiguration visible; her very eyes seemed to have sunk in their sockets; a rigidity of features, peculiar to a state of deadly anxiety, where despair began to prevail over hope, defied her arts of concealment. Altogether, she exhibited that ghastly expression so well known to watchers of the sick, and to physicians, as the *Hippocratic countenance;* which occurs when nature takes the alarm of the mastery of death over her fainting powers—by some secret warning not sensible to bystanders, except by that change or look, its fatal announcement. Some secret abandonment of hope by the mind, analogous to that extremity of the vital powers in the body, had imparted an analogous horror to her aspect.

It was in vain that her smile rested on him; it betrayed a frightful trouble of the soul within, and gleamed through ghastly eyes. He was terrified, and inquired her ailment; but she seemed not to see or hear him now, while her eyes remained riveted on the frame of the window door, like some one who believes he has seen a ghost, and keeps his gaze fixed on the spot where it appeared, as expecting it again. Then, roused by his alarmed attentions, she began to gasp as if coming out of a fainting, and with the wildness of delirium seized his hand, while she trembled to her very heart, and said piteously, while rising she dragged him she knew not where, "Come away, Septimus! come with me—this way, not that! Come, this moment! Bar that door, sister Winny! bolt it! Come, now, now, now! come to——" A rapid blush succeeded to death-pallor, even while her reason evidently reeled like her form, which now, with a shiver of horror, as she once more rolled her wild eyes at the glass, sunk into his arms. So sudden was the whole, that his sister hardly knew whether her conduct was serious, or a playful feigning of alarm, and the person without seemed to deem the reclining posture thus assumed, as one of endearment; at least, a few more hollow-voiced accents still

disguised, ridiculed on that sudden action. The sound seemed to recall Nest from that half fainting state, she recovered her self-possession with her senses, and lost it no more. She now resumed her place at the table with astonishing presence of mind, and imputed her wild manner to a coincidence of the voice with a dream, which, together with the heat, had thrown her into that hysterical extravagance. She officiated again at supper; helping her husband to the cold joint she had been carving, and pressing him to eat while she partook of some sallad herself. No sooner was comfort thus restored to the affrighted bridegroom, than another voice—*(a child's)* came startingly close, through the thick foliage, saying in a formal manner, as if dictated to, by some one whose whispered promptings were audible—"Mamma! Mamma! I am come to look for you, Mamma!"

"A child too abroad at this hour!" said Septimus, "does the little creature think his mother with us, I wonder? Go, sister, do; how came it in the orchard? go round to it; then let's go in doors, and no more of this foolery."

Nest, meanwhile, had risen, and was laying her face to the glass. "The moon is setting, I think—let *me* go, sister, the air will refresh me a little." Speaking these words very com-

posedly, Nest withdrew through the glazed door, whence the back of that arbour was only to be reached by a circuit of a part of the orchard.

A pause of undefined, perhaps ominous, painful suspense, of a few minutes, kept the brother and sister sitting precisely as she left them, looking at each other, not eating, neither speaking. "I beg your pardon, my dear Winny, said he, at last, suddenly, let me help you. Where's the carving knife?

"None, thank ye; but have you lost the knife? *That's* it, is it not?"

"No—what she was using was long and sharp-pointed—I've quite an aversion to those knives; it's quite a deadly weapon. Perhaps it's fallen down."

The search employed another minute or two, but it was not to be found.

"Never mind, Septy, I want no more—'tis no matter."

"Nor I."

So both sat silent again.

"Has she lain it somewhere?" he resumed, still a little anxious. "As the moon goes down, it has threatened for a thunder-storm these two nights. I thought I heard it hollowly beginning among the trees of our orchard

just now; there was a kind of shrill wailing wind came that way, didn't you hear it?"

"Nay, I think 'twas the strange dog we saw lost to-day, that's set up his howl far up the mountain, as he did by the lake at nightfall, poor dumb beast. I could hardly hear it, it was far off. What a dismal sound is their yell when lost!"

"What a fitful faculty is the memory!" Septimus, suddenly rubbing his forehead, exclaimed. "Where were my senses? Why that was my college crony Bevan's cracked voice, *to a certainty!* Ha! *now* I understand," he added, to himself, and bit his lips in vexation: for now he pierced the mystery of anyone being able to taunt him on that secret draw-back on his bliss, which he thought close shut within his bosom and her's. And his cheek burned at the thought of the Collegian's having detected himself as the party on whose delicate perplexity he had consulted him, now pretty clear from the nature of that Latin quotation from Persius, which reflected on the bridegroom as privy to his bride's previous frailty. He little dreamed, however, what was the actual fact, that he had proposed his question, "to marry or not to marry," to the very seducer of her childhood! Of course Mr. Bevan, had more

than a conjectural ground for identifying the imagined third party with Septimus Morris himself. The rash flight of his victim (whom he with her parents had long thought drowned, and carried out to sea by the tide-river on whose banks she strewed her cloathes), her desertion of the new-born child, all equally identified the wanderer imprudently described to him by the flurried and conscious youth, put off his guard by the suddenness of the misery with which he was so full, with that Maria S——n whom himself had made that outcast. Hence sprung that emotion he betrayed when consulted by Septimus, and which has been already mentioned. The part of the latter was imprudent, because he knew Bevan's father to be a wealthy landowner, in the neighbourhood of Nest's birth, whence the son might recognise in the described girl, the fugitive daughter of some tenant. Nor did Septimus keep silence wholly on the seeming predestination to murder, of her family, as faithfully reported to him by Winifred, as one strong incentive to the poor girl's desperate step, and apology for it. Of a malignant disposition, withal affected with jealousy of his friend, Bevan watched the movements of the unsuspecting pair, removed the child from her parents to a cottage in the

vicinity of Llynllyfni village, and bringing it secretly to the wedding festivity, led it after nightfall to become the instrument of a mean revenge. Whether he believed the mother to have divulged the secret to her husband or not, is uncertain. At least, such a visit at such a moment assured to him a vexatious embarrassment for both parties.

But no sooner was the bridegroom's dormant recollection awakened, than a whole train of associated ideas was kindled, which rapidly led to a wild conclusion that Bevan was the very man! He recalled his evident emotion on being asked his opinion or rather feeling on the proposed case, and a hundred little corroborating facts revived in his mind. It was but another leap in thought to a terrible abyss :—all was explained—the child's call—his wife's hysterical change of countenance and conduct—and last—most terrible—the missing knife! He knew too well the excessive horror she still felt at the idea of his own becoming conscious of her early frailty, which had been the chief cause that he had not already divulged his knowledge of the fact before. In truth, he had not dared to do so, from his consciousness of her violent character, a violence not spending itself in explosions of temper, as in some, but working

all within like a pent volcano, until by some extraordinary conjuncture, a forcible vent was opened for it, as in the confession of her fault, extorted by the strangeness of her predicament with Septimus and his sister. Besides this, it would have been painful to the latter to have stood convicted of betraying her unfortunate friend's secret, so solemnly, pathetically, confided to her, however strong the temptation to that betrayal—scarcely less than a brother's life, certainly his peace for life.

"Oh God! that I had told her all!" was the inward lament of Septimus, as, without a word to his sister, he rushed out, leaped the low garden rock, and stood in the solemn depth of mountains, listening for a minute before he could summon courage to call or search further. Not a soul was abroad, all *invited* guests having long since taken their various paths over the mountains. It was evident that his enemy had lingered in the orchard alone with the child.

The storm that Septimus had believed brewing in the elements, seemed to have broken only in his own bosom; but a stagnant murkiness of the atmosphere, such as precedes a summer storm, hung oppressive, nothing else announcing one. He hurried round to the orchard back, and called his wife by name in

vain. A farm servant first, next his sister, met him there; but Nest answered not to their united call, any more than she had done to his single voice previously. He next flew to the lake side, where he had fancied some shadow like a human figure moving, at his first coming forth. Proceeding till beyond reach of hearing from the house, he picked up her handkerchief she had worn on her neck. Directed by it to further search, he found, by the star-light, evident signs of a struggle on that spot. Crushed fern and flowers that grew plentifully on the water's side, made a large circle in the sod, more visible from its being out of the little path, where no feet had trampled the richer verdure and plants that fringed the solitary lake.

A shoe next lay at his hand, groping in the dusk! It was her's. But something more significant caught his eye, among some bulrushes, glistening there, as if arrested in its way to the water, whither it had been thrown by an arm too feeble. It was the knife! The very heart of Septimus died within him now; yet he hardly could have specified what particular calamity he foresaw or feared to instantly prove, among several of the most abhorrent kind and blackest dye. With desperate eagerness he held up

the sabre-shaped instrument, with its blade so turned as to catch the most light, from the place where the moon yet left a faint splendour. He fancied it red: he presented it to a brilliant star emerging, and to the summer night-sky that began to clear again a little; it was much stained with yet wet blood. "My love!" he cried! my lost lost wife, alive or dead, *still* lost, body and soul, I fear—where are you? But I will die with you, for you. It was my act! whoever hears me in that wood or water, it was *my* murder! I confess—bear witness!"

All things reeled round him, with his reeling brain, and he felt and looked and spoke aloud all the wildness of the really mad, as with the knife in his hand, and holding it up to the stars, and touching it again and again, in the vain wish to believe it dew upon its blade, he rushed on along the path, reiterating these expressions of the thoughts flying across his mind.

It has been already said that there is a narrow isthmus of turf, like a pier dividing the water of the Nantlle Lake into two; Septimus had just reached this part, when some figured blackness was evident betwixt his eyes and the dark glisten of the water's face with its deep stars; and it waved to and fro, though fixed on

the lake edge. It was a woman, in the rapid up and down motion of bowing over her knees clasped by her arms, which is so common a female expression of violent and anxious grief. In a moment her husband was on her neck smothering her forehead, eyes, and lips with kisses, as he eagerly yet gently bent them back up against the sky to reassure himself of her existence, which now it seemed constituted his only dread; though other doubts as fearful had almost maddened him the previous minute, and within another minute they returned. Nest was speechless, darkly absorbed, and returned not his endearments. "Oh Nest—oh my girl! what have you done?" said he.

"Not *yet!* not *yet* then! You know nothing yet?" she said, rising and gasping as if new waked.

"What is this?—oh, *this, this!*"— he said hollowly, and pointing to the blood on the knife blade.

"What have I done—*when* do you mean? *when? now? just now*, to-night, or long ago? Speak!" Nest rejoined eagerly, not noticing his last question.

"Oh Nest, Nest," said her husband, letting the knife drop, who thought this but an evasion, "you know too well I mean *to-night*—

but don't tremble so," and giving her up for an already death-doomed creature of forfeit life, he wept bitterly. "*I'll* never quit your side! 'in sickness and in health!' so it ran! and in shame and in agony and in death, my poor girl, I am yours, and *will* be yours!" His weeping recalled her from her stony abstraction, to some languid revival of fondness, and she offered to lean her head on his shoulder.

"*Yours* still, then? *still* a little longer *yet? is* it so, dear?" She was about to throw herself on his neck, when the cry and distress of a sobbing child as of one lost, coming along the green isthmus-bank, rose nearer and nearer. A sudden desperate stamp of the foot, a recoil from his half-encircled neck, and a frightful shriek, told her consciousness to the sound.

"Thank God!" Septimus ejaculated. Probably she heard not, nor would have understood the words if heard; for she was already on the narrow sod causeway along which the child came wildly calling on his mother, doubtless meaning the female, whoever it was, that had fulfilled that office to his helplessness.

Meanwhile her husband, whose mind's eye now saw the bloody corpse of the wretched Bevan deep in the night-lake, and his murderess ready to ascend the scaffold instead of that

nuptial-bed so long unaccountably deferred, so near crowning his long-tried affection, that husband—so innocent, so tormented—stood statue-like at the end of the pass, revolving what chance was left of escape, or mitigation of her penal doom. It was impossible, doating on her as he did, for him to regard her as the sudden monster whose steps must be dogged to preserve her own offspring from her clutch, to prevent her rushing on the crime of infanticide! "One false step! but one slippery stone! such was her shocking murmur as she walked to meet the lost boy, crying all the way, *one* fall in this dark, one child's trip of the foot, and I might live awhile *yet!* No witness! a deep dark water! a dumb water! And he calls 'mother' all the while! Christ save me from that sound! Smother it, water,—it and him—both, and for ever!" As they met she turned quite round, half in act to spring from the bank, when the child caught her gown, pleased to find any one, still more a female in that desolate place. It had been attracted across by the sound of voices probably. Its innocent hanging upon her and affecting distress, perhaps deferred at least some catastrophe, for she stood like an image, till the poor child, growing frightened as much at this wild dumb muttering woman, so met and

standing betwixt two waters, as at the night and wild scene, at last faltered on alone to the end of the causeway, sobbing afresh and more. The *mother* revived within her, so that she could not help following the little lonely creature's dangerous walk with her eyes, belying the cruel wish forced on no unnatural heart by the agony of a yet stronger passion. Every little totter she perceived in its fearful steps smote her heart, every sob added to the triumph of nature over the morbid excess of a just feeling.

She was again at his side as he reached the end! In a few seconds more, in the very eyes of her husband, she threw herself on her knees to snatch the forlorn boy to her bosom. She drew him close there, she seated herself on the damp herbage with him on her lap, kissing him, while her long hair fallen down flowed over his beauty, he lulled, stranger though she was, by female protection.

To Septimus then she addressed herself, with the solemnity of a dying woman, not even through the dusk presenting her face to his. "So *now* it *is* all over! now there 's no more unsaying nor deceiving! now the world is at an end, *to me!* and I thank God, whose judgment I do think it was, in pity to you and in wrath on me, that he has thus almost at the last

moment, forbidden me to wrong you, by a foul deceit; and you, my dear, to be its victim, to live to loath me! Kiss me, Septy! no deceit in my *love* for you, oh no, no! Never believe that! If ever love worked like a madness—but no matter. Now my heart's own, my own Septy shall marry some one worthy of him, some, *good* girl, *not* fonder, not faithfuller! but one not like me—oh! it's what I have wished for you night and day! Your sister, good dear Winny, knows I have; and God, and all that 's above those stars, knows how loth I was to deceive you; how this very night I could have almost borne to have substituted some spotless white creature, if you could have loved her, for my vile miserable self!"

"Peace, for God's sake, no more if you would 'nt break my heart, you are my own delicate dear—pure—you 're all that—"

"*You* are a madman," she exclaimed, starting to her feet, "who *will not* be cured, or made to understand—*I am a mother!* that child is mine! *Now* will you not strike me dead? But, oh, I was young! you 'll hardly credit how young! But pray remember *that*, and let my eyes be closed by your hand, and my grave be close by your grave, if no other wife—"

Suddenly Septimus, recalled by this allusion

to his dreadful suspicion of that crime already done, which devotes its perpetrators to the bird of prey and the ravens' wing, and bleaching air for the last obsequies, exclaimed, "You keep me on the rack! the very rack! suspense had taken my senses—your sweet sad voice has called me to thoughts of life again—answer me—*murder?* —One word, one nod's enough, and I'll never say word except of love to you, Nest. In your blood, as in your beauty, I will, I must 'have and hold' till we die, die hand in hand! *Bevan! is he alive?*"

"Ha!" she cried out, "do *you* know that man?"

"Wretched woman," Septimus exclaimed, "this is cruel! An answer! Where is his body?"

"I saw him lurking in the shade of those rocks, not long since," she answered; "he was drunken and brutal to me, and threatened to go to you with his story if I would not consent. So I defended myself, and we wrestled for the knife. I found blood on me, and he fell down after leaving me; I know no more. But what of him? Is'nt there a fouler story than that you are expecting? Had you cast me from your heart *before?* How is this? So indifferent!"

"You declare before all-seeing God this for truth? He lives?"

"Before God."

Septimus springing in ecstacy from where he leaned his forehead against an upright crag under a dark hanging mass of rock shrubs, stopped her mouth ere the solemn word could pass, with such a long close devouring kiss of mixed bliss and fullness of heart's-content as utterly astonished the unhappy girl, at long variance with herself, and expecting upbraiding, loathing, eternal desertion from that moment. The little fellow again feeling lost, during the distraction of both their minds from him, began again to cry to go home, at which Septimus, always attached to little children, stroked the fair curly head of the small yet to her dreadful stranger, who even by the stars exhibited a countenance of interest and beauty.

"Am I awake? *You* fondling my"—she said in a voice quavering with the inward convulsion that kept her heart quaking, "and not a word, a curse! Mr. Septimus Morris! my master, sir, husband! are you mad? I tell you once more, that is *my* child, mine, born of her you married for a spinster, a virgin, a virtuous maid, this very morning at Llanlyfeni church altar!"

Her husband, happy now in tenfold degree,

after the soul-soothing assurance of her freedom from bloodguiltiness, clasped the child to his bosom, kissed its chill forehead, and with that action put it into the arms of his astonished wife, who could hardly be prevailed on to open them, in her distrust of his sincere meaning.

"*And mine too, ours,* my dear, dear wife, my Maria!" he said, while placing him there, and then clasping both most tenderly in one embrace, as the boy stood in her lap enfolding her neck.

"Henceforth not a word more, my love, on this subject," he added; "*I know all, I have long known*—yes, my poor little fellow, you shall come *home* directly, and never leave it more, if I and Winny and all of us can tempt you to stop and exchange your other home for it."

The good fosterfather acted in after years up to the generosity of a rapturous minute.

The little intruder, who had nearly been the cause of a fearful tragedy, played with and helped to nurse a fine little family of half-brothers and sisters, along the lake side where the parents spent great part of a terrible bridal night.

The drunken dissolute collegian, who would have taken so gross and cruel an advantage of his fugitive victim, had received a desperate

wound in the arm, from her heroic virtue, which, causing him to faint from loss of blood, led to the wandering of the lost child. The spirited conduct of Mr. Morris, who made his totally avoiding the neighbourhood the condition of sparing him two inflictions not at all suited to his dastardly character, a duel and a criminal prosecution for his violence, secured to the mother the undisturbed protectorship of her little boy, whom both grew passionately fond of in the childless interim of a twelvemonth, before a closer tie was formed to their romantic love.

With what vague horrible idea the bride armed herself with the knife that night, it were more philosophical than humane to investigate. In the issue, the brutality of her dreaded disturber seemed providential, effecting at once some punishment for himself (for it became requisite to amputate his arm), and *perhaps* salvation for her, perhaps for her child. The struggle he rendered one of just self-defence by his criminal violence, must have worn a darker character but for his own act, attempted as it might have been by her, in that desperate extremity of her situation, and perhaps added one more victim, a pitiable one, to the list of those whom fancy might almost believe darkly driven on by destiny. As the event proved, our

humble heroine had a narrow escape from confronting that fatality of blood in the very path she took to avoid it; yet defied the malignant star that seems to hang its dismal spark in red eclipse over the nativities of the S——— family.

EVENING.

The Major and Parson had been on a little separate excursion, from which they returned during our reading. Something in the small face of our holy friend, betrayed some ridiculous adventure which had occurred on their subscription chase round Barmouth and among the few wealthier farmers of that vicinity and Dolgelly. The Major's *genuine* good humour sealed his lips on this affair, which was one of some *humour;* but Ezekiel, believing him to have told us on our travel toward Harlech (which we now commenced), as soon as his back was turned related the whole himself before we reached our tea encampment.

I don't know whether I told thee that the Parson is very deaf. Owing to this infirmity, the Major is kind enough to accompany him, on his tour "in Search of the Evangelical," to

recite his Hymns and Sacred Lyrics for him occasionally, his own voice being remarkably sweet yet sonorous, while Ezekiel's has a vile squeak in it, his ear also being very bad.

What is called *fun* is generally without reciprocity of *funniness*—the droll 'mischief' which is play to one party is often the last thing that party would think of *playing* off on himself, or becoming droll with, should another play it on him. But the *innate* gentleman, I had almost said, in Major R. has taught him to bring over this species of waggery to the side of goodnature; and, having brought, he is rather a lover of it, for he is in heart a boy.

On this occasion the event was contrary to his expectation. In consonance with this love of *kind* roguery, he does now and then vastly heighten any civil things which pious farmers' wives or elderly maiden aunts may say of the Sacred Poems, in repeating them to the deaf poet. From this no further mischief occurs than an *excess* of pleased reply from him, and a sainted complacency of smile from his composed, pale, miniature, yet solemn countenance, at one of those withered and *rather* unintellectual ones, whose lips had merely uttered some commonplace remark—the civility of which, too often, alas! was intended to spare

the more costly civility of subscribing to the publication.

Yesterday, however, they alighted on the farm house of a rather rare character in quiet and happy Wales—a red-hot reforming farmer, one who would leave his hay under a hanging thunder storm, ungathered into cocks, to wait the arrival of the post-boy with news, that he might be *first* to catch some grand news of grand "movements."

This sturdy yeoman our Major found seated at his dinner board, extending across one end of a huge kitchen, filled with the clouds reeking from hot hogflesh, a great globose of fat and potatoes on the bare board, in huge heap, in the midst, as well as the added human exhalations of five or six farm servants, all in high appetite and perspiration. Ezekiel spoke apart with the worthy mistress; while the Major, with the Parson's volume in his hand, waited awhile for the vile ravening fury of the mere bodily hunger to be a little appeased, before he applied himself to that (more consequential) of the famishing spirit. For be it known our reformer was one of the "serious" world, had "meetings" holden at his house frequently, and his wife was a woman highly noticed by all the "ministers" who preached on that circuit,

and grew every day more happily confident in her own election and the lost state of most persons round her, and, as thus happy and full of grace, every day, of course, more melancholy and "serious" and evil-eyed towards all cheerful toils, sports, and even speakings.

Now here subscription seemed pretty secure, but the Major knew the way to the master's heart as well as to the wife's, and the master being "every inch a master," truth to tell, a bit of a tyrant *at home* (but sworn against even the *shadow* of tyranny beyond the threshold) his will was to be won over as the first step to the conquest of hers. In this conviction the Major drew forth to read, a recent newspaper which happened to contain, I know not what gratifying intelligence to all Radical hearts (of which just now there has been much stirring) one that he had bought at Barmouth for some trout. As he sat on a stool just behind the hungry patriot, the latter, at every paragraph, was so delighted, that, flinging down knife and fork, he reverted a face distended on each side to the magnitude of a trumpeter's in full blow, and eyes dilated with triumphant glee, rubbed his hands and grunted "*Very gude!*" Ever and anon his nearly emptied mouth made him revert to the business again, which dispatched,

and the buccinatores muscles put on full stretch again with fat, &c. as two bladders with wind, back turned the adult cherub face over his shoulder full to the Major's, with the yet more emphatic "Excellent! *we'll* beat the boroughmongers yet! And how then?"

Now the Parson, in the dusk extremity of the low ceilinged kitchen, with the Major's back to him, sate retired, in his modesty of conscious genius, while his works were being read, and never doubted but that it was some of the nobler hymns which were thus stirring the very soul of the farmer, though his deafness prevented his hearing a word. His own spirit, betwixt piety and vanity thus glutted, became as excited as the former; the tears twinkled in his eyes—they upturned to Heaven; the good wife was sighing in the chimney nook, with her plate in her lap, and paid no attention to him, while once or twice he was on the point of springing towards the charmingly feeling and *judicious* dear man, and shaking his great hand. Perhaps the Major really did not *design* this mistake, so delightful to our friend; but I confess I do suspect him shrewdly. However this might be, Ezekiel, with the interesting emotion natural to an author under just praise or respect, advanced a little, and sent an eager

whisper to his friend, while this delightful pantomime was at height,—by which he hoped to actually convulse the pious farmer, and perhaps clench him, *in the heat*, for half a dozen copies, —prompting the Major thus, "Read 'Devils ever black and red!'—Major! I say, Major! 'Devils ever black and red!'—hundred and ninety-ninth hymn, fiftieth verse!" The Major's gestures he took for assent, and continued his prompting:—"'Horns of horror! tails of fire!'"

In that very ecstacy of his did the farmer burst into an incomprehensible laugh; a most indecent deadness to that holy rapture, evinced by an *oath*, (to which his politics but not his faith consented, no doubt,) an oath so vehement as to become shockingly audible to him. It struck cold indeed on his heart. Affronted Religion (not Genius, of course) waxed strong within him; and, timing his step to the awful dignity of the occasion, he approached, lifted up his tiny voice, and began thus: "Sir! if not the holiness of a hymn, if not the harp of heaven, if not the hot horrors of ——" That moment he happened to detect in his friend's hand, within his own MS., which was still bigger, the broad sheet of some Radical freedom-monger, and a minute's pause allowed

the nature of his mistake to become apparent to him. I do not trouble you with the details of the explanation, the wide-mouthed wonder of the servant men, the titters of the brawny-armed wenches rushing by our priest, some with huge pots of boiled whey for cheese-making, others with others of potatoes for the hogs, which now came bullying round the door: —suffice it to say, that when the goodwife had, with a most subdued and serious air, with slow gravity, and many a deep-drawn and loud "Hah!" between almost every mouthful (taken in such sort as if her heavenly-mindedness made it a mere reluctant work of winding up the gross machine of flesh, only kept alive to keep the *life of the Spirit* in,) gone through the second pound of pork, or something near it, put on her wooden plate,—when her lord had swilled some *cwrrw*, and she sipped a quart of buttermilk,—the gentle pair retired to consult, and coming back, put a blunt question to the reverend Ezekiel, "*Be* you a minister of *the Gospel*, or *be* ye one of them of the steeple-house?" The inevitable reply was fatal to his hopes, and he has returned as he went this time, but in worse humour with his little preferment in the Church, wishing it even less: that is to say, none at all. For when he has

taken solid gold in its service, except what goes to his very poor mother, I believe he values it less than the name of a single subscriber to his book, although this is but a few shillings, and but *in futuro*. "But *this*," he says, chuckling, and pointing to his forehead, 'villianous low,' "*this* (the name on his list) I owe to intellect, —to this *within!* *Merit* got me this. Sir, I 've a just pride in a shilling *earned* this way, that I've not in five pounds the other!" The poor gentleman sets down all to account of the charms of his genius, and not the force of importunity, or of any of the hundred other causes which might win him a subscriber.

EVENING.

THE DROWNED LAND, OR CANTREV Y GWAELOD.

Isthmus of Mochras in Ardudwy, Merionyddshire.

THE sea-side church of Llanfair was the object of our journey of this evening. There is a solemn interest in the scenery, though sombre and sad, which was all before us, as we approached it, after quitting the road to Harlech. A lifeless-looking triangular tract of russet marsh, or what has been wholly salt-

marsh, stretched away to a distant point, terminating in the enormous ruins of an ancient mighty pier, a buttress against the ocean, visible at low water. Stone inclosures, and those few, dingy, peat-morass, brown rushes, with their dreary *burlesque* of flowering, and the dark gorse-patches, skirted by thinly greened sand-hills in the distance, all looked desolation and sadness.

In this dead prospect, but three or four strongly defined objects break the drear monotony. These are—a most melancholy, lone farm-house, that seems nearly cut off from all the haunts of men, –a church half buried in the sand-drifts, with nothing but sky and waves for its back ground,—and that remoter huge rock-ruin running out to sea. I need not remark what an added moral pensiveness this landscape receives from the history of that ancient barrier, or "shipwrecking causeway," as it is called, when I add that it is the only monument of a fine overwhelmed country, to which it formed the mighty dike, and whose breach admitted whole ocean, to its sudden destruction.

Tales of swallowed and of inundated districts are very common, and often very false; but there are so many incidental allusions in Welsh

historical records to the *Cantrev y Gwaelod*, "the overflowed hundred," that I believe no doubt exists of the fact, corroborated as it is by this gigantic relic. Sea-monsters prowl where a thousand flocks whitened whole landscapes, (for it is said to have been a rich and populous pastoral region, with several towns,) and sailors are said to see the remains of works of men's hands projecting from the wonderful floor of the sea, when looking down in calm. Thinking on the ten thousand violent deaths, without book, bell, or burial, (or grave, but the common roaring one, yawning once and shutting in so few minutes for all time after,) we almost forgot that dwindled receptacle of the dead, the churchyard we were approaching, in brooding over that grander, dreadful sepulchre.

That mysterious antiquity just named, also called the *Sarn Padrig*, "St. Patrick's Causeway," which seemed the single wild cenotaph hinting thousand tragedies, rose solemner for the darkly gorgeous colouring of a lurid sunset on the stern prospect. Its ridged length, the last object of the dying eyes of so many shipwrecked men, was rendered visible by the line of the white waves breaking over it. The sun setting large and red in a murky

distance, threw the "umbered" gloom of a dying glory like a veil over the whole scene, solemn even without such pensive illumination; the billow-beaten church, and that single abode of sad and almost insulated life, the farm of *Mochras*,—these, joined now, in our nearer view, to a long shore of dreadful precipices, produced all the melancholy sublime of effect, that sky and land, and life and death, can impart to landscape.

"Who votes for a night's bivouac by the sea?" enquired our leader. "That farm is distant enough to allow our solitary encampment; and there will be a moon, so we shall not need our fire long." The Major had a mind to return to Harlech for some flies he had left behind—(I do not mention his fishing, but leave that to be *always* presumed, at least in all inland places)—and the Parson did not like, I could perceive, a night's lodging so near the dead, for there is the Doctor's proposed resting place; so I cannot yet tell (writing now at our tea) what company—besides that pale party beneath their sands—we shall have to supper with us.

This is really a strange site for a place of worship, but of course it was originally much further from the waves. The sea has so far

encroached on the land, that the churchyard is a real drift of sands, the waves in every high flood and storm break against the antique tower as over a lighthouse, tossing the spray among the graves, and threatening ere long to disinter the dead, and afford them a second and more magnificent sepulture than they received at the hand of man.

As the night draws on and our tea-fire grows more vivid, glimmering by the little that remains of the height of the churchyard walls, almost ridged up with sands, the view from the water's edge thus lighted is grotesque. The old weather-beaten stone of the church looks like a formal-shaped rock rising out of the drifts of its cemetery, where death itself looks more desolate, thus all but cut off from resort of the living. Nothing grows in it but the strong prickly sea-holly, and a few other marine plants (harsh contrast to the flowers growing over *inland* Welsh graves!) that thrive in the briny atmosphere which has withered the scanty herbage all along the coast-inclosures.

A single contorted bush or tree, looking as ruinous as the terrible hole it overhangs, an exposed charnel, alone presents any vegetating object to form a shadow in the moon now just emerging. Our two companions have

slunk away, I find, while I was out on the sands; our two boys are within the tent; and, not relishing the sea air by night, I purpose following our deserters. But the night is one of stagnant calm, and the walk to Harlech is a noble one like a mountain terrace.

And, now the horizontal moon seemed to create, as it were, the solemn scene after a transient darkness. The pale-fronted mural precipices rose for miles, with the shadowed shore they formed, with its wild coves, hinting to the mind tremendous ideas of the helplessness and the sure destruction of any one venturing between their perpendicular dungeon walls, and that broad sea, now hastening up to shut (fathom deep!) those more than human, than giant gates, on the surprised wretch, were one caught there, looking desperately up to their jagged tops' battlements. The long sleepy kind of measured thunder-peal, which was heard into remote distance dying away, grew sepulchral to fancy, like a dirge grandly performing in some distant monastery or cathedral.

Suddenly I found myself alone. The Rural Doctor, with that contradiction which so often puzzles one in dissecting minds or hearts, loves churchyards like a very *goule*, though death is

most terrible to his imagination! But perhaps it is that very terror which invests the subject with a dreary attraction. In truth, what other involves the same intensity of curiosity, or of fearful pathos? I saw his figure stir in the slight shadow of the charnel-thorn, where the melancholy human ruins of ruins, dust of dead, and broken skulls, had already almost been reinterred by the wind, (the wild sexton!) in every blustering night bringing his tribute of added sands.

Having returned with a pretty perfect skull for his night's rumination, (that object over which man might think till thought should faint or rave,) I left him alone with his humour.

NIGHT.

The sea-side church-yard in *Ardudwy*, as before.

On my rejoining our gipsy leader next morning, (the Major is gone forward on our road, as agreed on, with the Parson, to a spot where we shall join them,) I found him somewhat discomposed, and more serious than ever before. The children could no longer draw him out of himself, and his eyes kept wandering down the tremendous prison passage formed by the walls of cliff, and the high waves, now almost risen to their bases, and already near

enough, the sea being rough, to deluge the narrow rocky road, (for there is one at low water,) with its tumbling waves' spray at least, which kept leaping to some height far as our eyes could reach, a distant headland standing out, to curb it at last, like one horn of a shallow bay. But I am describing *to-day*, and I have yet to give you the Night of yesterday. "I had an odd night," he said at last; and presently he explained how.

He had not been long alone, sitting with the skull in his lap (which, by the way, he says he loves to scrutinize, not for the idle dreams of phrenology, whose "*science*" is worthy of the age, but partly for its grand melancholy as a ruin, the fallen seat of the empire of thought, partly for its minute sublimities of almighty workmanship,) when he fancied some figure moved in and out of the severed masses of white fog between himself and the low moon grandly opposite, now dimmed enough to allow the whole multitude of stars, which a sea-view permits to the eye at once, to come out brilliantly, and shine down thick above the waters, rocks, and mists. The many sandhills, behind which this object seemed to vanish and re-appear, added to the perplexed appearance from the fog. The Doctor, after watching it,

took a walk that way, and in one of the cross valleys of sand, waving its thin mockery of grasses and dark herbage, and tinkling low with those briny springs that irrigate the marsh, and creep out there to sea, he distinctly saw a man with a wallet at his back, and a staff, (tourist-fashion,) but whose sullen haunting of such a place by night, and some wildness in his starts of meditation, militated against the idea attached to a pleasure-traveller.

In the next minute he plunged into the dense vapour, and a low singing of some plaintive air, but hollow, and from a voice shrill with exhaustion, came out of the dense fog-cloud, till another hillock of sand which he passed behind, deadened, and quickly cut off the sound, as the mist had done the figure.

There is something inexplicable in that awe with which we accost, or even approach, the mad. It is not merely solemn pity for a spectacle of divine visitation, for we feel it not from other even ghastlier objects. The Doctor became suspicious that he is one of those reasoning maniacs which go through a long series of stages, (antecedent to the great crash, in which Reason's whole throne comes down,) suffering hideous obscurations, and ominous wanderings, and secret agitations, all confined to their own

bosoms, like the warning tremblings and hollow sounds under the foundation of a city, before the earthquake, signs which interrupt nothing of its daily pursuits, nor drive men from their homes, till all at once, all reel and rush together!

Under this fancy he grew eager to ascertain the fact, always curious next to death itself, about death *of mind*. And here, I must say, I think the Doctor's ideas, (often self-delusive and ill-grounded,) plausible, when he holds that there are as many degrees between actual *sanity* and confirmed *insanity*, as between actual health of body and death. Yet, do not "doctors" recognize only that last form under which mind appears, when prostrate, utterly extinct, as the only insanity, which may truly be rather termed the mind's *dissolution?* Perhaps this, after all, is the least pitiable of its forms. Even the decidedly mad by intervals, in so far as regards human sympathy and pity, (if those be worth anything to the wise,) have perhaps the advantage of those others *mad only to themselves*, in disease, not overthrow of mind; inasmuch as (like some poor wretch unequal to the torture of the tread-mill, for such *it is*, to the shame of those who in Britain have abolished "the question," from suffering some *inward*

disease which is disbelieved,) such invalided soldier in this world's war of life, is liable to blame for not fighting as well in it as those whose minds are robust, and as fitted to the work as a bull's neck to its yoke.

Cowper, known to have been a "wounded deer," under the dispensation of a mysterious heaven, was an object of sympathy, and had "mankind his friend." Had he never happened to require temporary restraint, had he needed the wages of some toil, mental or bodily, to keep him alive, and had he been one of the "unknown poets," what indolence, what wayward neglects, what dereliction of duties, might not have been lain to the account of that loose, lazy, musing, good-for-nothing man, "*that* Cowper!" But his nerves or his malady, by an outbreak, revealed his secret, that of a too true deadly infirmity of soul, mind, nerves, that might have driven him to wilder aberrations, had his fortunes been as sunken as his spirit. There may be thousands sane, who well might envy him even his insanity! his, thus gentle and thus soothed! envy his intellectual evenings, his pensive walks, and power to "fill the languid pause between" the intenser moods of mind with the flow of soul, to "draw close the curtains, wheel the sofa round." But for a

fatal tendency, encouraged by erring friendship, to draw darkness and death out of a creed of light and life, those happy "pauses" might have saved him from much which he suffered; and, doubtless, did save him from more and even worse which he would have suffered, had his mind eternally preyed on itself.

I don't know what business I had precisely with that amiable poet and man *here*, but you know I am on an excursion. Excursive thought is excusable, I hope.

To return then, our Doctor, after missing the wanderer long among the hillocks, came out to the sandy higher part of the shore, and was walking toward the church, a little anxious about the boys in the tent, whom this odd tourist might at least terrify, when suddenly he was startled in the shrubless and treeless level by motion; that of an enormous length of shadow, stretching far beyond himself, which came slowly across his path, thus projected by some object passing on the sea's edge, between the moon (its half-disk alone remaining) and himself. Turning, he saw that it was the stranger, now become stock still. The Doctor will have it that he saw this same person clambering up Harlech Castle rock, when he remained there alone after me, a few nights since,

though the deep shady side of that crag, in which he was quickly lost as a cloud came over the moon, obscured the figure, so that he did not feel sure that it was not merely his own shadow cast to the spot, as he walked on the grassy breadth of a wall's broken ridge.

He took courage to approach this shadowlike man. While he paused to scrutinize his features for some evidence of character, the stranger turned from him, but not so suddenly as to prevent his catching, by the dim long red light, (the very last of the orb's last segment of red,) the expression of his countenance. The shy sullenness of dislike to being intruded on, seemed apparent in his averting his eyes; also a deeper feeling, something of such melancholy as some great painter or sculptor might desire to catch from living features, to eternally animate his creation in more enduring stone or canvass, to embody the conception, not only of the life-loathing of a Timon, but something of such hate of mankind, (or rather hate of human wickedness,) as might mark the Athenian's countenance in the *first* moments of his soul's transfiguration, not the *all*-involving detesting fury of the *last*. Yet, it seemed evident that his turning from society was not yet so complete, but that he retained some deference even

to conventional forms, as marked by his eagerness to depart before his disturber should speak, and thus oblige him to speak in answer, or violate common civility. When our Doctor, however, renewed his pursuit, he moved away no more, but stood on the very brink of the sea-waves, following each wave's retreat as the tide was running out. Again his aspect seemed yet more indicative of that something desperate, yet calm, which it is a trouble and terror to piteous minds to look on, and to a firmer one, a fearful pleasure of curiosity.

The very idea of one alone, at that hour, and by the thundering music of that broad sea, walking with his own thoughts in the valley of the *shadow* of mental death, had a strange effect on his observer, (himself a little *un*worldly, but some *stages* behind the other solitary,) so strange as to make him insensibly fall into meditation over the *object*, instead of saluting the *man*, as was so natural in the situation. Meanwhile, the stranger on his part seemed well enough satisfied with his silence, and even a grim content seemed to compose his rather livid countenance, at remaining unmolested, although his sunken eyes never once rested on his visitor, but were fixed on the spot of the sea-vault where the moon had gone down.

His stature did not reach middle height, yet his being the sole upright object in the vast shady prospect, the moon setting, the sea's floor darkening, and the naked marsh borders fading momently from view—perhaps also something deceptive to our ideas by false association in that mental elevation, which intense abstraction, with sadness, suggests, but does not always accompany—made that stature appear almost lofty.

Thus while he was examined as intently by a stranger, as if he had been a work of statuary, he in return, so far from curiosity, seemed to hardly retain recollection of a human presence; like one in such earnest debate with some person, or on some subject, as to neither hear or see one before him, unless as a shadow; and he walked past him and away from him, as if from a mere upright shivered pillar of rock, up the wild beach. Yet, as if in almost wilful evidence of his contempt of his own form and species, he, directly after, picked up a polypus, laying down his staff to uplift with both hands this low and imperfect specimen of organised life, examining this blue loathsome living jelly, with seeming curiosity, who had not a word, perhaps not a thought, for that boasted lofty mas-

terpiece of nature, and favourite work of God—a man!

As the Doctor walked slowly far behind, he found a sea-drenched paper on the sand, and presently found that the traveller, if he was such, was strewing papers on the sea, as each breaking wave came almost round him; and which they again deposited, when he was gone, on the still lowering line of the tide's height, leaving them among the seawrack, and other refuse, after their few moments' floating on the foam. As if there were some secret attraction between the "membra disjecta" of poets, here came floating stray "Addenda" to our collector's remains of the "Unknown," and there, too, one might say, came into odd collision on that dark sea-shore two poets, in *temperament* at least. In London indeed, immortal geniuses must now be hourly jostling one another in the street (such is the multitude of them) without dreaming of the sublime transit; but on the wild coast of Ardudwy these luminaries even yet are not in such abundance but that such approximation is worth noting.

Neither perhaps would they be even recognised, as poets by the *true* POETS of this age, or merely ranked with those old scalds and their like, which the savage simplicity of the earliest

ages has produced, and who wrote merely from feeling and some fierce prompting of occasion, careless to please and fearless to offend.

On the return of our solitary fellow traveller to his tent, he was too much excited (or depressed) by this singular intruder's dumb visit and departure, to quickly compose himself to rest, so he amused himself by lighting his lamp and adding these scraps to his "Membra Disjecta." The only entire piece he could form was an

ODE TO THE PLANET EARTH, AT MIDNIGHT.

Mysterious Star on which I stand,
From which I sprung, to which return,
Fast! fast as flows Life's ebbing sand!
This pitchy dark, this silence stern,
In which nought hear I, nought discern,
Break if thou canst, and tell me where I go!
Oh, for a voice to break! oh Light! Light! Light!
Light from Thy palace, God! to tell or show
Whither we sail on—on—through this profoundest night!

And did I cry to *thee*, thou Vault?
Yes, as a prisoner his bars
Will shake and cry to and assault!
Loathsome thy woes and thy works, wars,
My whole soul thy whole *hell* abhors,
Man's dreadful, beautiful, triumphal *hearse!*
Whiche'er thy doomsday lot, or fire or flood,
On! Golgotha of this pure universe,
In flames to purge thy stain, or waters wash thy blood!!

Roll on, roll on, thou dreadful Ball!
With all thy living, all thy dead,
Wrecks, wars, and revolutions all,
Thrones with a million murders red,
And empires on whose dust we tread,
And virtues on whose heart, and greatness on whose head!
One down-trod head or heart, the more or less,
Is nothing; yet is it hell-pain to shed
Hot tears alone! alone bear Nature's last distress!

As one who tow'rd a Spring-green hill,
Looks, from some lazar-house's wall,
There flocks lie peaceful, all is still,
While *here* Woe! "Help!" 'God take me!' all
The sick and dying round him call—
So, gazing from this howling world's convex,
On yon blue fields, soft stars, and Milky Way,
Tied to this place of wrongs, woes, skulls, and wrecks,
The peace of God seems *there*—oh, *there* that man might stray!

For in that midnight blue intense,
Does *not* Thy peace, dread Father! dwell?
Is death up in that hushed immense?
Are those Thy glories visible—
Each, but like this, a glorious *hell?*
Those orbs so bright, so soft-beamed, so sublime,
Each, with its monstrous freight unnatural, whirled,
Spurn'd merit, trampled virtue, rampant crime,
That mystery of sin and death—*a world?*

Mercy forbid! for pity starts
At thought of thousand worlds like this,
Rolling with all their bleeding hearts,
Ashes and blood and miseries.

And crimes, through th' infinite abyss!
Oh, are those glorious glistering mansions built
For some proud reptile's pompous death and birth?
Impossible!—yet why then thou, sun-gilt
Palace—for Man's? oh! wherefore *thou*, fair Earth?

And *thou* to me wast beautiful,
Once, as yon Morn 's or Evening 's star,
Ere yet I knew thee, for this dull
Place of pollution and a skull!
Worthy of Heaven seemed these more fair
Forms, with soft eye and breast's white sanctuary;
And Man's of *that* white heaven; now better known,
That whitened sepulchre that mocks the weary!
This, man's cold hollow heart, like the sepulchral stone!

My soul! turn from them; let us soar;
Mount the winged mind, flee far and fast;
Alight we on some golden shore
Of yon bright islands in the Vast!
And, as a land-bird on a mast
Sings sadly in its melancholy rest,
Yea, builds its wild nest rocking to the wind,
Build we up there our transitory nest,
And people some fair star with a more fair *Mankind.*

Hail, angel-Woman! woman-Man!
Those are but shadows of your brightness,
We 've left *below!* oh, breast of swan,
The same heaven-tinctured veins, and whiteness
Within thou more than pelican!
Is this that breast, without its lightness?
Here too, its heave the melody of Motion?
This Man, grown pleased with innocence and calm?
Man with no blood-cry at his heels, from all air, lands, and ocean?

Leap, heart! let rapture storm the chords!
Lo! angel-*souls* in women's forms;
Lo! woman-*hearts* in earth's hard lords;
An Earth without its plagues and storms;
A bosom that defies the worms!
Lo! this immortal breast's warm alabaster
For my eternal pillow—pure, divine!
Oh! fall as from a heaven to hell! fast, faster
Than we up-flew, we sink, my soul! Ah, what a dream was mine!

Ah! dive we, then, *beneath* earth's floor,
Above is but death's forest—one
Wilderness, where man flies before
The Pale Horse and the Skeleton,
"Hallooing" his whole blood-pack "on!"
From the world's ends he calls them, from earth's womb,—
"Cold! Heat! Fire! Fire-damp! Hurricano! wan
Disease! thyself a pack! brave Sin, a doom!"
All bloody—bloodiest th' unnatural jackall, "Man!"

Turn to earth's dead! Ye hosts within,
With million upturned faces lying,
Severed but by partition thin,
From those who trample ye with flying
Banners, drums, cries, themselves a-dying
In Time's dry shambles!—sure that ghastly grin
Is upward turned at th' empire-founders,—all
Who keep above your skulls this hideous din,
The conquering, ruling, ruining, wretches of this dim ball

Rest we with you, great company,
Of whom I shall be one so soon;
I, hapless, who have yet to die!

Ye, no more world-weary in noon,
Nor sad 'neath the pathetic moon,
(Malignant star of memory!)
Ye, whose barks anchored are, ours anchorless!
Ye, waked from th' hysteric passion of life's dream,
Wildly to weep and laugh no more! oh, *this*,
This is the sleep, and *we* the sleepers which you *seem*!'

END OF THE SECOND DAY.

THE

MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

THIRD DAY.

ARGUMENT.

The Quaker finds a Royal Sepulchre of superhuman architecture, and covered with an imperishable pall, that is, the "clod of the valley" and the grass of the sheep-walk.—Poets, and the fate of those "dying without their fame."—A Story of a Girl and Raven.

MORNING.

Nant Cwm Bedd Gwyrtheyrn, or "The Brook of the Valley of Vortigern's Grave," Caernarvonshire.

I WRITE on a fine soft turf, covering a huge mound on the very edge of the sea, which is said to have been the last low abode of the ill-fated King Vortigern, and which gives name to this profound, vast, and lonely mountain-hollow, whither we have made an excursion from our beloved *Traeths*, designing to return to them.

On each hand, but an arrow's flight distant, rises a sea-shore mountain, this valley being

but the gorge (a very profound one) of the mountain-chain. Behind is the long steep descent by which we came down, furzy and ferny, with white lumps of seeming marble all about, golden furze flowers, but looking so frightfully lofty, that one doubts how it is ever to be scaled on our return—"hic labor, hoc opus est." Before, heaving grand, bright, solitary, rolls the sea across the mouth of our green pit, as I may call it, though two homes of human beings peep, weedy-roofed, like two upheaved portions of the mere heathy ground, in this breach in the sea-wall of mountain. Nor do these homes destroy the profoundness of the solitude, but add to it.

There is always a peculiar character in those portions of our maritime Welsh counties that run out by a long narrowing neck of land into the sea, those long "promontories" as they are called, such as that of the Creddyn beyond Conway, of Penlynn, between the two Traeths, which we have just left, and this of *Lynn*, which we are upon, which terminates in the wild fisherman's village of Aberayron, off which lies the island of monastic ruins, Bardsey, full of graves of *saints* (God bless the mark!) and of suffering refugees that fled from the successive invaders of Britain.

As these long peninsulæ lead to no place of consequence, and are cut off by the ocean from other parts, (the waves of both their shores being within hearing of the most central inhabitant towards their extremities,) their wildness is not tamed by intercourse or traffic; their green roads are the peculiar haunt of the shepherd farmers that occupy their sea-girt dells and breezy heights, forming grand and romantic *banks* to a tempestuous sea, proverbially fatal to seamen, as the names of many of the perilous rock-coves testify, such as "Hell's Mouth," which latter, to a *landsman looks* all security—a fine deep indenture of the mountain's shore, its blue-brimming basin, in a serene day, seeming the very haven which a poor seafaring man in distress would desire and make for.

As you pursue this still narrowing promontory, you have before, the sublimest near prospects of mighty slopes of mountain, some way up whose bases the white surges are seen to periodically leap and fall, keeping time to the solemn, low, thundering music of the sea's breaking, unseen, on some far-down beach. The reverberating rocks, as also, (near the extremity,) the less distinct roar of the tumbling waves, caught all along the *other* side of your green pastoral natural *pier*, produce a grand

confusion of sound, with some dreamy pleasure of imaginary peril as you proceed on your dwindling bastion between two seas, both beating it in fury; and a little onward uniting and sweeping round the extreme point, "the very sea-mark of your utmost goal," bellowing in thunder-peal, "So far shalt thou go, and no farther!"

If the whole promontory be a sort of solitude, this dingle (of a kingly grave) Nant Gwyrtheyrn, which is an untrodden outbreak from its wild and lonesome road, is, you may judge, a very solitude of solitudes; a spot, fit indeed for remorse in a monarch's bosom, to make its *living* sepulchre, as we are told did the self-immolating Vortigern.*

Here, as we enjoy our breakfast, under our glorious blue roof, and in the (already pleasant) cool shadow of a great mountain's head, (Pen Llan,) we seem utterly shut out, (or rather *in*,) from the world. The few little fields of the two inhabited earth hillocks, for they are no more to our eyes here, the small yellow projections and larger black ones, which break the monotony of sod and flowering furze-clumps, being *stacks* of grain and of peat, serve to relieve the

* There is, however, more than one place in Wales to which the last days and death of that king are assigned by tradition.

sadness of the narrow view, thus looking at the mercy of that mighty body of water before, almost overhung by mountain-tops at each side, and cut off behind, from everything but the strong-winged bird of prey, by a long, long ascending precipice; for such in truth it is, the descent being necessarily zigzag down its craggy front.

We listened for any voice from those hermit huts, but caught none. A poor dwarf and cripple, by the way, lives in one of them, *who has never* in his life, of some forty years I think, left that valley. No sound of driving the "team a-field," nor salute of meeting country-folk on their market road, nor calling of cows to milking, nor reaper's song, nor herdsmen behind droves of mountain-cattle, nor scythe, nor even shepherd-boy's pipe; nothing that spoke or hinted of rural, or even human doings, met our eyes or ears, or touched the heart, or addressed the social nature, through any one sense—nothing, except those removed objects, the dim ricks, and green houses of earthen-looking wildness, hinting of such a life of loneness as impressed yet deeper on the mind the idea of tremendous solitude.

The site of the supposed fallen home of the suicidal monarch, now a nameless knoll turf-clothed, (which I have possessed myself of to

command the sea-view more,) was in our eye. Nor this alone. The bones of the royal fugitive themselves are believed to be but divided by a few feet of earth from us. A stone coffin, enclosing a gigantic skeleton, was discovered within that assigned site about a century back, and re-committed to its burial place; a fact, giving plausibility at least to the tradition, supported as that is by the name of the spot—"Vortigern's Hollow."

We, all except the Doctor, made an excursion to the cottages, leaving him to the sea, the *green* shore, (a great charm in a sea-coast,) the sea's voice, and the sunshine, knowing that these would be much preferred to *our* company. He has a strange fancy that a stranger (traveller) is dogging our steps, taking a tour with us, or rather behind us, in his own sullen fashion. He conceits that he has seen repeatedly the figure at a distance, of a man equipped cap-a-pee for a tourist, who yet always fails to overtake or meet us, when espied behind or before, nor has he happened to see or imagine such person when the rest of us were near. Now, on our return from the houses, he gave us some strange account (in joke or earnest, I hardly know) of such a faded, abstracted-looking personage *appearing*, seeming, or being seated on this wild burial mound of sod, washed at its

base by the sea. He states that the person, or figure, sate with his head hung down, chin on his breast, clasped hands stretched out in his lap, motionless in the sun, in the deep stillness, the atmosphere being as calm as the great floor of glistering waves in front, over which hardly a sea-fowl fluttered, the wind quite sunken, not a flag nor rush of an adjacent marshy pool stirring. While the Doctor remained as motionless, in something like awe, as the figure he was watching, it continued distinct; but on his rising from his seat to approach this sudden intruder, he arose also, and disappeared.

I conceive this must have been merely the strong recollection of his night-visitor, (of *your* last night, but not our's, by many,) or, if more than pure some imagination, optical illusion of the nature of the *mirage*, and nothing but the shadow, or rather airy effigies of our fancy-fraught fellow-traveller's own proper person. It was improbable that any one had descended to that lone spot at the same time with us without our seeing him, as there is little to conceal any object.

A strange thing is imagination! A fearful thing when unchecked, unbroken by worldly

pursuits—dangerously fostered in youth for delight; in after-life for idle hope of some sort of glory; perhaps in life's decline in pure despair!—for the dreadful joy of melancholy!—a joy as real and as fatal to all worthy aims and pursuits, as that of grief for the dead. That often quoted "*of imagination all compact,*" a poet's definition of a poet (except in some few instances of high good fortune), is, or ought to be held, synonymous with such words as "plague-stricken," "lightning-blasted," "death-doomed," "hope-abandoned," "lost man," "child of perdition;" for nothing less forcible can express the condition of that most luckless conjunction of feelings, luckless beyond the most malign of planetary ones (according to astrological dreams) that constitutes the poetical character.

If even the acknowledged, the fortunate poet be often an object of compassion while walking the world's eminence crowned, and fed with homage; how much more justly may *he* claim our pity who, framed on the very same model, with the same sensibility to excessive pain, never realizes one hope of his fancy's ten thousand, all as sanguine as that fortunate poet's? And what degree of commiseration finds *he?* None at all!

The other *lucky* pilgrim of life's desert finds or forms a little beautiful *oasis* there; but the curse of never-satisfied wishing still besets even him; he sits down but to *growl* in his little Paradise, and but swells his longed-for Castalian spring with his tears. He exclaims "all is vanity," and curses and hates even those who admire and pity him; yet *still* they pity! The *luckless* wretch of imagination on the other hand, pants on, plagued with the eternal *mirage* only of that sparkling fountain, and verdure of flowers, which the other has gained; toils on, and sits him down to weep on the arid prickly-weeded spot—of thirst and famine and fever even to death, where the flying picture had mocked him—to weep, to curse his fate and die! and the world—those whom he does not curse, not hate—laugh at him!

The victim of imagination, with his exaggerated conception of enjoyment, his radical constitutional melancholy, ready to make even the prize he seeks pall on the mind's sickly taste too soon, feels that within which words can ill express—a pain with a wrath of conscious impotence to self-relief, portending "a bloody set" to life's loathsome-lighted sun, when that melancholy comes to reign sole, overspreading mind and heart, as the shade of

a great storm coming does both heaven and the earth.

Whatever may have been the object of his passionate longing — perhaps fame — perhaps some white, soft, delightful human creature to doat on, to live and die for — he resembles in his first rapture and last despair, some poor child, who has found a glow-worm, and *waits* (poor innocent fool!) for the sun's rising to see it better by; pulls it out of his bosom where it had lapped it so long, and behold! nothing but an ugly poor worm! All its brilliance was but owing to the dark which this silly wanderer of the heath had walked in, when it pulled its prize out of the gorse painfully!

But — heavens! where have I rambled while reporting, as my own, the reflections which the Rural Doctor has been making on the perilous gift of imagination? Let me at once then restore his right to him, while I duly record our sayings and doings.

Thou wilt perhaps secretly opine, Friend, that my time might be better spent than in enacting the humble "Boswell" to so humble and obscure a character as my Mountain Doctor. I fear you are right.

I am not going to be so very humble an one either; for I shall form one speaker, if not a

garrulous one in these grotesque symposia among mountains. And having touched on classic ground (which we utterly forswear for our doings hereafter, of course, we being profoundly classical notwithstanding), I shall venture to assume a higher name, and beg to announce myself as the rather prolix Apollodorus of the feast, and our new friend as the little peripatetic Aristodemus, my authority for whatever I may venture of opinion, or narration, in Welsh matters.

If I have found no Socrates to suggest a new taste to me as a relief from that tædium vitæ which I, like my ancient prototype gossip, have not wholly escaped; yet this man has quickened my old tastes towards peace and simple life. Moreover, our talk of "pleasant drowsihed" had much reference to tragedy, like that at the Platonic banquet; the occasion having been the triumph of Agathon, in his first essay in that noble art, albeit *we* have nothing to talk of but its downfall. Again, be it premised, that whereas we shall exactly copy the Platonic method (and *genius* too) in every day's rustic symposium, so far as to mix with as much mirth as we can afford, as much point and pith as we may have at command, on some moral or political (but that *very* rarely), or any possible

sort of object (Welshly or mundane) that may float in the mortal hemisphere, "now like a cloud, presently like a dragon," we shall exactly differ from our original in the uproarious and Bacchanal close, presuming therein to look for another model more to our mind, namely, the banquet of wise men of Plutarch!

Be not, therefore, impatient of this interval of our tale-telling; but remember that these "pribbles and prabbles" form a promised part of our entertainment. And here for the last time, let me borrow a thought from our mock prototype, and apply that just reflection of the victorious Agathon to a modern aspirant's feelings, on appealing to *our* public, namely, that the whole mass of the thirty-thousand-strong audience of an Athenian theatre, is less formidable to the feeling candidate, than the cool clear judgment of the qualified and feeling few.

It was in reply to some sentiment of this sort that the Rural Doctor (still in his dock-leaf cap) broke out, with some acerbity,

"Sir, let the age laud itself as it will on its correct critical taste and verdicts, and patronage of genius, it is with this matter, as with all human matters: a man, whether of genius or none—without a friend is as a dead man in his grave. A man buried alive might as reason-

ably expect to reach by the loudness, and touch by the music of his voice the citizens overhead, rattling by his black damp city-churchyard, through all the earth over his lips and head and breast, as for a buried *genius* to catch the attention of the *fashionable* or critical world, to his hollow-sounding appeal, had he the tongue of an angel, and that tongue the strength and compass of the trump of the Archangel. How can we expect a man thus 'cabined, cribbed,' to sing as musical and loud in his figurative coffin, and snug little grave, as Moore among the ladies, and Lady's?" Our next tale follows.

THE RAVEN FROM THE DEAD.

CHAPTER I.

WALES boasts a Venus of her own, or at least a Saint, (St. Dwynwen,) to whose intercessions lovers of both sexes in Catholic times owed much, as her shrine in a nook of the Menai Strait on the Anglesey shore testified, formerly enriched with many a grateful offering.

A wild and melancholy Paphos has this Cambrian Venus now!—a ruin, almost buried in sand-drifts, crumbling lonely, beaten by a stormy sea. On a little plain haunted by cormorants and puffins, without any sound but their wailing cries, and that of the measured break of waves on their utterly deserted recess, hemmed in on all sides but the ocean, by grotesque rocks, moulders the shrine of the *Venus* of Wales!

Yet had this wind-and-wave-beaten ruin of a church strange attraction for a poor girl—a modern Catholic, and orphan, born of an unfortunate Irish female, who, dying on her landing at Holyhead, in search of the father (a Welshman, who had promised her marriage,) paid the penalty of her frailty by an untimely death, joined to the anguish of leaving her child, then but two or three years old, to the compassion of strangers. This child, at the date of this story, grown into a fine young woman, it was, whose pallid face and dejected figure were often to be seen by moonlight in the green area of the ruin, sitting on the old stones that looked set in moss and grass, and often using attitudes and breathing low mournful half-accents, such as a Roman Catholic votary of former days, might have used and breathed.

On one of these occasions, as she watched

the floating of silver clouds across the moon, upturning her eyes through the wild ceiling of a few leafy branches that supplied the place of the long vanished roof of Llanddwyn church, a raven alighted within the open window-place of broken stone, almost at her side. A low rustling without, that seemed more than the stirring of the wind in so calm a summer night, had startled her just before; and it was as she motioned to look through the broken place, that this oddly bold bird came flapping black between her eye and the vast glistening expanse of the sea, stretching all before, and retained its stand, almost within her hand's reach. If this was singular, still more so was the agitation of this poor girl under the little surprise. Ronah Partridge—for that was her name—fell trembling all over, advanced not a step, as if dreading to drive it away, yet seemed by a sudden half expansion of her arms, (too delicate for a mere farm-servant as she was,) to express a sort of wild welcome, such as was inexplicable towards an ugly bird. There seemed too a solemn horror coming over her whole aspect, as if she had seen something supernatural—then she crossed herself thrice, then clasped her rather wasted hands together, and held stretched out at length to the little glooming

object perched there, with such a solemn background of starry blue and watery solitude. Irresolutely, she by little and little advanced to try if it would allow her approach. It did! Even when quite within reach of her touch, still she forbore to touch it, while her trembling grew more violent, and she seemed ready to faint. But when she dared the experiment, and her shaking hand was actually placed on its smooth gloss of feathers, and it shook its wings, as if acknowledging the touch,——she uttered a wild though hollow scream, betwixt terror and something like pleasure of recognizing some one long absent and lamented for lost, and exclaiming, "Ah my God! Ah my dear——" —swooned and fell ere she articulated the something she would have added, the name of the beloved object of her thought.

Awaiting the poor girl's recovery, to whom (by the way) we cannot very speedily return, let us review the short life of Ronah Partridge.

Her father had emigrated from the isle of Anglesey, to seek his fortune abroad, leaving an elder brother, a farmer, on a snug farm inheritance in that county. Touching at an Irish port, and being detained there, he unfortunately engaged in that illicit amour, which ended fatally for the object of his love, as also of his

intended vows. The day of parting from her proved fatal to the self-command of the very young lovers; he fully designed to marry her on his return, but news of his death reached her after about three years, and the forlorn mother resolved to carry her child over to Wales, her lost lover's country, in hope to engage for it the future protection of his surviving brother; she came, and died as has been stated. The brother Evan, touched with pity, for his brother's sake nobly answered the poor mother's dying appeal on behalf of the little child, about to be left an orphan alone, complying even with her further prayer, that her little Ronah should be brought up in her own (the Catholic) persuasion. She became in all respects as his own child.

At eighteen years of age, then, Ronah is become a sort of humble relation, in servitude to her uncle and benefactor—an unacknowledged niece to his rather proud, sourly moral, yet not hard-hearted dame; a secretly *beloved* cousin to the favourite son William, bred at the *'varsity*—bred to the Church! A fine scholar, but now going out as a missionary under the Church Missionary Society for Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts. The two other sons regarded poor Ronah, indeed, as a *sister*, but

took hence occasion to treat her with all the freedoms that lubberly brothers will take, emboldened by the excessive humbleness of this poor girl, rather low-spirited, especially after William's going away to the University; although more cheerful, more bustling, from that very day, in her extreme dread of Dame Partridge's detecting her presumptuous grief, or suspecting that she *dared* to be sorry for the going away of *her* son "the parson."

This excessive humbleness and fear of her mistress on the part of poor Ronah, was fatal to the peace of the two lovers, if such they might be called, when all their outward signs of love had been rather betrayals to each other than declarations; and that powerful passion which each had formed, was still lurking in each separate bosom, little confident of full return. The contrast of the boisterous rudeness of the two other boys, to the tender gentleness of the more quiet-spirited boy, William, had been secretly sapping the very foundation of all heart-defence in the poor girl, however conscious of her own unfitness to become his wife, from her peculiar situation and birth, so that she became, ere aware, *his* in heart, in mind, in soul, in everything but hope. The terrors of her aunt's haughty hate of such an alliance, not only kept

her hopeless; but the no less marked extreme kindness of old Partridge operated equally to impose utter despair on her every thought that way. If she could hereafter have dared the wrath of the old woman, who, though almost loving her as a daughter, scorned her for a daughter-in-law, she felt she could not ever bear to make an ungrateful return to him who had received her an outcast, cherished her in the bosom of his family, given her the family name, and really loved her like a father. To say truth, the dame did not love her much less than did her fosterfather and uncle, she having no daughter of her own; but she was herself of a "good family," moreover, intolerant of female frailty as any old maid, extending her horror of the results thereof, even to the remotest generation of those unfortunates designated in Wales "*love children*," more vulgarly "*byeblows*."

I said that Ronah's timid disguise was fatal to the young people's peace. Thus it was:— William, however religious, had no sort of *call* to converting the Heathen. His whole secret thoughts were bent upon a snug Welsh parsonage, where he might, *some day*, lead over its humble green threshold that sweet-natured and soft-eyed young creature, with whom his boy-

hood had passed in all interchange of gentle offices, tender looks, and innocent small talk, till, as more manly years arrived, he found himself an engaged man, without a word of engagement! His whole heart turned from the whole sex besides, as by some second nature; his every serious idea, in passion and the future, coming home to his own blushing Ronah, with her downcast conscious eyes, their stolen looks into his own, her low soft tones, her humble step and speech withal, her real beauty coming *home*, like a bird to its own tree's nest, or child from play to its own mother's lap.

But how, after all, was he to know that she *returned* all his love? How to penetrate a bashful, ever-subdued mind, habituated to perpetual disguise, ashamed even to betray to himself that she had the boldness and arrogance to think of *him?* To her natural virgin diffidence was superadded that invincible repugnance to confession of so presumptuous a passion, which long thrall to her aunt's humours had made thus natural to her. William, without a thought in the first instance of becoming a missionary, resolved to *test* his mistress's feelings for him, by hinting something about devoting himself to this perilous self-imposed duty.

Such little secret ordeals of each other's

hearts and faiths, are often resorted to by lovers, but here the poor inexperienced youth became his own tormentor. The disclosure of this idea was made, not to Ronah direct, and with no witness, but in her hearing to his mother. The dame's pride prevailed over her fondness, and she listened to the project of her son's braving climate and sea perils and bigoted barbarians, partly for the honour's and partly for religion's sake; for she was a rather severely devout woman, moreover, much biassed by a dissenting minister, a neighbour, who, being present, lauded the youth's zeal to the skies, only regretting that he should not go out under the auspices of the *Methodist*, instead of the *Church* Missionary Society.

It was to pretty Ronah's down-turned eye, however, that William turned secretly for a dumb reply, turned with almost suspended breath and pulse; he only wanted a look there, of pretty mourning anger, to decide his lot. A little more pale to creep over the fairness which made some paleness constant there, was all he wished to keep him at home for ever! He waited the rise of the delicate eyelids, and started, when they rose, at a laugh dancing there, then mantling over the whole face! A faint-spoken joke about his slenderness of per-

son, making him an ill match for possible conflicts with heathen savages, who might prefer their own little dumpy gods to our true, struck a damp to the young man's very heart. A sickness came over his secret hope, a total revulsion to his nature as he fancied— Yes, he began to be in earnest—yes, he *would* be a missionary; would brave danger, death :—the cold, unfeeling girl! But, *he* had not her heart! She was *feeling*, she was *not* cold-hearted; she *would* have whimpered, trembled, for *another*, any one that she *loved!* Then why should he *not* go, *indeed?* He *would* go! Yet, who could have thought it? She that sometimes seemed to fear if he but rode too fast, or waded a swollen brook!

All this hurly-burly blew up in the youth's mind in one moment, merely because *he* did not happen to see his mother's eye turned, (perhaps suspiciously,) on poor Ronah's face, who never appeared more gay and thoughtless in her life than she did that whole evening, while the corpulent man of zeal pursued the theme of the young man's self-devotion, pushing his idle mere fancy into details of action as if he had announced his real early departure; and poor William, quiet-spirited as he was, caught something (under his sudden pique and

loosing of his heart from her,) of the real spirit of exile-adventure; and still, Ronah, the fear of the mistress ever before her eyes, betrayed at once the down-sinking, the cold, the forlorn anticipations of her fond heart, but smiled, joked, and *masqueraded* on.

It was a pity that the deceived William, whose cheek and whose heart burned with anger, anxiety, and palpitation, under this unlooked-for indifference, had not surprised the girl after her quitting the house to call the cows from beyond the brook in the deep dingle; that he had not heard her sob with her face (now *unmasked*, and all bathed in tears) buried in the deep autumn leaves of the steep wood, where she had thrown herself along, sunken at heart, seeing him already dying in some desert; that he had not seen her, hopeless, aghast, wretched, as she lay and murmured, "Ah, William! you think nothing of leaving *me!*"

He did not thus luckily surprise her; he grew cold in sullenness, when they again met alone. She, in turn, thought herself considered too slightly, as his mother's servant, by him, for him even to talk to *her* on this alarming topic, to *her* whose heart dropped as dead within her at its mention! for he did not talk.

She felt how deadly an anxiety he had stricken to her heart, and a little wrath crept over her gentle spirit, so feeling, to be so "*made nothing*" of, and thus the misunderstanding grew, and so they parted that time, and William was urged by many friends, and flattered by the zealots, who looked forward with great complacency to the great fruits that were to spring from his voluntary exile and perils: and not to be tedious—ultimately the Reverend William Partridge's name was seen (and is still to be seen) on the books of the Society, as one of the Missionaries that sailed in the month of May 18.. in the ship "Fortune" for the South Sea Islands.

Though William actually left the country of his nativity, without this error of the lovers having been corrected, chance gave opportunity of explanation, when it was too late. Adverse winds compelled the ship "Fortune," in which he sailed, to lie long in a port near enough to allow his revisiting home once more. It was by sunrise in a very warm morning that William, who had walked all night, drew near home, when nothing was stirring but the birds, and few of those. There grows an aged wood, on a precipice close to the farm, under which there is one of those

huge stone cisterns rudely cut out from the native rock to receive the high waterfall that is heard for ever making its viewless way, down within the leafy dark, till it leaps out sparkling to view, and filling with ceaseless overflow this rustic receptacle, fringed with mosses and wild flowers, and long silken grass, having a ledge for a seat or granite shelf, to receive the purified dairy vessels, after rinsing, in their delightful whiteness and sweetness.

Passing abruptly round a corner of this precipice of wood, the young man was startled by the figure of Ronah, coming abroad (through sleeplessness) at that early hour, negligently clothed from full assurance of the solitude of the situation, her bosom almost bare, and with a singular pensive absence of mind in her manner, evinced in her remaining to gaze, almost as in stupor, at the loved intruder, till he was close to her, unmindful of that spectacle of snowy beauty left to feast his ardent eyes. Notwithstanding this attraction, notwithstanding his own sentiments on its nature, (he who had often asserted that it constitutes the "true sublime and beautiful" of *mortal* objects at least, if we combine the charming, the tender, the *parental* emotions all obedient to its influence on the eye,) *he* hardly paused to devour

that visual luxury, for the shock he received from her extreme illness of look, so greatly was she changed in the short period since his departure. He had seen her stooping to wash her eyes at the rock-cistern, and he soon perceived the reason, their redness from long weeping being such as would scarcely escape her aunt's vigilant eye.

Passing the little fright of seeing him, her restoration to presence of mind, her scarlet blush and hurried adjustment of her dress, and beautiful hair, that sported over her neck,—suffice it to say, that *now* a full mutual avowal of passion took place, on his eager inquiries as to the cause of her great pallidness, languor, and hollow tones, indicating debility and exhaustion. Long was their conversation—that *first* and last *lovers'* talk, in the silent, dewy sweetness of the morning. Then it was, in the very depth of the dark wood, that those young mourners, for such they were, began to talk between sobs, of the world to come, they who, it was too likely, would never enjoy *this* again, together.

It is very well for the withered at heart, withered in hope, and in person, to talk of the day of death as a pleasant day, though dark. It is natural for those who have little to leave,

or nothing—to look calmly to eternal parting —from, what? an empty world! This great clod, gilded by sun and greened by spring, that is become but the general vault for all that could love them or attach them to its loveliness; —to such persons, dragging on such *post obit* existence, no doubt the grave may seem no more than a kind though cold bosom, on which they would willingly lay their heads; and death only a more troubled falling asleep.—But how could these lovers, thus for the first time blest in full assurance of such prize as each had won in the other's heart, how could *they* endure, in that same moment, the almost as strong assurance that this, their rich, full, satisfying world, was passing away? that the grave was yawning for the rash adventurer, and a death of unusual terrors his probable early lot? This reflection drove them to diving into futurity, to exploring the prospect beyond death; and, whatever doubts he might once have submitted to of future existence, he now drew a sort of faith from but gazing stedfastly in that soft face of her's, (angelical now, even had it *not* been beautiful before,) while the mixture of passionate grief, love, and some superstition, entirely removed its expression out of the sphere of common physiognomy in a simple country

girl, into somewhat allied to unearthly grandeur, and elevation over mortality.

In this pathetic solemn mood, it was agreed that, whichever of these lovers should first quit this mortal scene, he or she would *appear* to the survivor.

"And in what shape shall I come?" said William, laughing to dispel her over-wrought emotion, for she shivered, and could not weep.

"Oh, your own, your own! none but your own!"

"And must I wear my own coat, this hat, this——"

"Oh don't, don't talk so, but *come!* Promise me!"

"But if not as I appear now, how shall I be *the same* to you? Ghosts do not smile to one another; laugh and cry at once, as we do now! They don't hold the thin waist of each other, but fix hollow eyes on our's, and walk in their white ghastly flesh and dropping shroud—no, no! I *must* come smart—I *must* put on my *best* clothes."

"Oh, *I'm* in earnest; don't mock me, William *bach!* * pray don't! Then don't wear that shape, no! be something else. I could'nt

* Epithet of endearment to males, as "vach" is to females. Both signify "little."

bear to see *you*, and *you* to look horrid at me; *I* speak to *you*, and you but groan! This blue sky wouldn't be sweet any longer, no more would this green prospect, if it did'nt shine on us, and the flowers not blow for us. Come as a *bird*, that I may fondle you! (oh, don't laugh!) and stay with me a little while to see me die; that I may put you to my lips, when my breath is going, as I would put my mouth to your mouth, if *you* were dying, to catch my death if I could, with your deathstruck breath! Oh, William, I am not mad!"

After all the tender madness of this simultaneous rushing together and separating of their hearts, that one day was spent by him, in secret interviews with her in the woods, without entering the house; then he returned to his ship.

The last bird that poor Ronah's morbid fancy pitched on for the spectral masque of her lover's soul after death, was the *Raven*.

Now may perhaps be guessed the cause of this poor girl's emotion on the visit of the raven to the moonlight ruin by the sea. But there is more to be told before we return to her in that situation.

CHAPTER II.

MISTRESS PARTRIDGE discovered, after a certain time, that her son had actually revisited his home, and never re-entered it, to see *her*, (the father was away,) making Ronah the sole object of his visit. Her wrath knew no bounds.

"Thou base-born! thou little-beloved! thou parish-cub! thou—thou—ye'll rob me of my dear boy's heart, *wilt* thee? He wouldna once come in to bid his poor old mother good bye again, would he? Thee'll break my heart, *wilt* thee? And my own flesh and blood going beyond sea, and spend all day like a thief and a gipsy-man in our own woods, lying about on the leaves with *thee*."

"Lying? lying? No, no, no—no! *in*deed, *in*deed, no, aunt dear!" interrupted the fainting girl, red as scarlet.

"How dare ye stop me saying a word, thou, thou—'aunt' me no aunts!"

"Don't fret, don't take on so, wench! Don't answer her,— don't cry!" old Mr. Partridge whispered Ronah, and while the dame's back was turned, hastily wiped one of her eyes with her shawl end, watching his wife all the while.

"What 's that you dare to say, Evy Partridge?" burst forth the dame, who ruled despotic in the old farm, and was rather deaf. "Aye, aye, *do* break my heart, *do!* between ye, you and your brother's ill-begotten, that ye've thrust under my nose!"

Mister Partridge went up to her ear and said, (as well as he could, having a little stutter,) "I did tell the hu—huss—hussey, to mind what you did say, and to cry, and *take on*. That 's all!"

"You lie—Effy, you lie! I saw you wipe her nasty eyes, so you did! And she and you 've kept my dear son from me, and on the last day; and I'll send out her—I'll keep her from you!"

In the midst of this sad brawl, the jolly form, in sleek black, of the "reverend" Mr. Bull, Minister of the Gospel, entered and filled the old wicker arm-chair, which the old farmer instantly vacated for him. He was rather a handsome man of middle age, dark and austere, by habitual attention to expression of face, but with frequent involuntary relaxation, that betrayed the vulgar voluptuary through the masquerade of the saint. So practised was this man in that *part* which the pseudo-divine of *ultra* Methodism deems it honest and necessary to

be constantly acting, that he seemed to carry about him a double countenance. When his eyes wandered over the rounded softness of the person of Ronah, or they turned on the unaffected blue languishment of hers, when he was aware of being observed, none could have known, who might not see what he looked at, whether a woman, or a baby, or picture, was the object. He but assumed a gentle fatherly placidity of gaze, so spiritualized, so passionless! But when only the innocent girl was the observer of those looks, whom he perhaps did not wish wholly to impress with such conviction of his superiority to all "love but that of Jesus," (as he often talked,) then he wore another face; yet tenderness was hardly there, so severe was his nature or his habit of disguise, or both; but rather that gloating, and fulsome sort of softening that is compatible with the greatest brutality—the mere sexual passion, grimly melting the hard nature for the moment —at once doating, yet stern, self-possessed as ever, though not wholly unmoved. Poor Ronah thought little of him, till the time when he seized so eagerly on the young man's fatal fancy of becoming a Missionary; biassed the mother's mind with all kinds of arguments, directed to her pride, her fanaticism, even her

maternal feelings, towards consenting to his long expatriation. From that time the reverend preacher and shopkeeper grew odious to her.

It was her lot, however, to become at last more intimately connected with him, as an inmate of his house. The breach became so wide between the incensed dame and her presumptuous niece, that it was agreed she should seek a service elsewhere. Poor old Partridge loved her very much; indeed, above all things but quietness. *Both* his dame would no longer allow him to have; so Ronah, ever submissive to her imperious mistress, even while expelling her from her service, obeyed her dictation as to a fresh asylum, and went servant to the "Rev." Mr. Bull "the preacher" of Trevaughan. To do justice, however, to the character of her aunt, faulty as was her temper, and implacable (at least for a time) her resentment, it was equally with regard to the worldly and spiritual welfare of the poor ejected girl, that she so readily consented to her taking this new place. She knew that, as he was a single man, much abroad in his preaching tours, the Minister's place was a very easy one, as Ronah's delicate constitution required; further, she believed that he would—good man!—be indefatigable in his attentions to her *soul*, and per-

haps convert her from her creed. Mrs. Partridge cried bitterly at her taking leave, began a fresh recapitulation of her own wrongs in her son's affections having been "stolen by her," as she said, from his mother; of his having come back, and not come in doors (in fact he knew he must have quite foregone Ronah's company if he had); and thus her self-defence went on, till fresh rage took the place of grief. The two lads for the first time looked sheepishly sorry at parting from "foolish Roney," as they used to call her; the old man promised slily to "fetch her home often on Sundays;" and she came, with her little bundle and heavy heart, to her new abode, an antique stone house, not far distant from the ruinous church of the sand hills, the deserted shrine of the Cambrian saint of Love,—Llanddwyn Church.*

Mrs. Partridge led her old man a grievous life for not "looking sharper after the young folks," and at last rated him outright for permitting his adopted child to leave their house, though the whole measure was her own. Presently she desired earnestly to have her home again; but the holy man sighed profoundly at a hint of this—signified that the world and the flesh had got strong hold of the poor young

* From Llan, a church, and Dwynwen the saint.

blind soul, and begged her to think how she would accuse herself, if by bringing her back from under *his* roof, she should relapse into that "perishing condition," whence he *did* hope "in the Lord Jesus," she was fast recovering. He set forth the advantage she enjoyed in having daily prayers, sermons (he did not spare for length), at her rising and down-lying, in meal time and fasting time. Her Catholic belief he disdained to meddle with, as certain to be forgotten in her new light. In fact, poor Ronah's profound melancholy (from a very different cause, her lover's absence and dangers) produced in her all "the outward and visible signs" of that new birth, which the preacher declared her to be on the very eve of. Love-melancholy wrought, in reality, all that sad indifference to the cheerful pursuits of life, that moping and musing, that disgust towards mirth, which are the most hopeful tokens of the elect's progress, in the eyes of fanaticism. Thus urged, Mrs. Partridge forebore pressing the return of her niece, though she felt in secret that her anger had deprived her of a gentle and obedient daughter—of her services, her soothings, if not her love.

Heavy trials quickly after fell on the family at Lwynmadoc.

The expectation of coal in some districts of

Wales, of metals in others, is the frequent source of ruin to the simple inhabitants. Some ore had been found (or had been *brought* on purpose to be found) on the farm of old Partridge. The ambition of the dame, who could not forget the former higher station of her family among the old grandees of Wales, was set on fire by this event. In vain did the lowly old farmer try to stem the torrent, remind her that they "wanted for nothing," pointed to the huge flitches that vista-ed the whole kitchen, dangling against all heads; pointed to the cheese all over half the floors above stairs, and under all the beds; to the huge pancheons of cream, the great peat stacks and wheat ricks, asking "What do we want with this here?" tossing scornfully the bits of copper ore, in his palm, which the "gentleman" miner, and his workmen (all paid by him), from time to time sent in to console him, and prompt further outlay in search of "the vein."

To be brief—at the beginning of this fatal lottery, Evan Partridge had never entered his venerable home on a snowy evening, without seeing, on one hand, numerous cows chewing plenty of hay in the beast-house under the same roof (divided by a heavy old oaken boarding breast high, and a narrow passage) with the rest

of his family—on the other, his kitchen hearth, with half a tree, as well as peat, beaming warmth to his very heart, his huge hams, &c. —and ere the die was cast, he had the melancholy sound, when he waked to toss and fret in the night, of one poor mouth going only, the solitary lowing of his *last* cow, all having been sold to push on this ruinous species of gambling.* Yet did Dame Partridge not "bate one jot" of hope, or desist from stimulating the poor easy man, till the adventure was actually brought to a stand still. Then looking around on the ruinous look of their little fields, the huge heaps of earth all about, the fruitless convulsions that thus had devastated the farm, —on the now wretched team of horses, and unrepaired carts, gamboos, and outhouses— her spirit broke, all at once, she spoke to no one, would weep by herself, often mutter about Ronah, and displayed all the mournful indications of an impetuous mind settling down into insanity.

Old Partridge was so struck with the change, that her constant patience moved him as her

* The writer has himself witnessed more than one instance of this complete ruin wrought by a *Coal* speculation, in South Wales.

anger never did. He wept like a child, comforted her by telling lies of their circumstances, and was never so comforted himself, as when something *did* put her in one of her old rages, and "shew the poor dear soul herself again," as he said.

Heavier hours were at hand :——But let us follow the young missionary. No sooner was he fairly on board, and sailing up the Channel, than his heart seemed to drop as dead within him, and he became as one entranced, forgot where he was, or disregarded it; heard nothing but the new and hateful uproar of shipboard, saw nothing but the dim blue coast, and its chalky white, which he was leaving—*for ever* — as his mournful presentiment whispered. "Were there no duties for me *at home?*" his heart said; and the idea of the heart he was perhaps breaking, to achieve the most improbable object, the *real* conversion, by his single efforts, of minds locked in ignorance as in ice, and hardened in prejudices he knew not how to meet, and with savage hearts he could never acquire the language of,—the idea of the sweet task of cherishing that loving creature, which he was refusing for one so stern, so hopeless, struck him terribly. Besides, William had nothing or little of enthusiasm in his new

calling. He had received an excellent classical education, was a lover of the poets, a loather of vulgar fanaticism, yet now found himself in the society of, and a fellow labourer with men, many of whom were not only despisers of all light but that of the Gospel, but bore a secret rancour against the very accomplishments he prized, and would be ready to stigmatise all elegant pursuits, all that he might hope solace from in the intervals of his sterner hours of duty, as almost criminal. The majority of those he would have to co-operate with, were men who had enjoyed so little of the elegancies or comforts of life, belonging as they did to the humblest classes of the uneducated, that the trials they were about to incur would form no such severe contrast to their former lives, nor new mode of life to their own former coarse and unintellectual habits, as it must do to the youth of some genius, of sensitive mind, and refined feelings—for such was William. He had, however, a deep feeling of religion, and this now added to his anguish. His conscience told him that not religion, but a foolish and rash mistake in a love-matter, was now impelling him to strange parts and perilous courses. Wanting the buoying aid of enthusiasm, which in some form or other was sup-

porting all on board, except him, the wretched young man felt utterly alone. God himself seemed angry with him for the mockery, and rejected the reluctant services of one who already wished at once to die, so his body might be washed *home* to meet his forsaken girl's eye, rather than perform his voyage in safety, and fulfil his mission, probably at last but to die, far from her eye, and perhaps his very fate never to be known to her. Hence conscience began to *pervert* his character—he was ready to throw his books, his poets, his old historians, his music, his violin into the sea, retaining only his Bible, that he might conform to his new lot, and catch some of the once despised unreasoning zeal, and overweening conceit and self-worship, of many of his fellow labourers.

Pallid and sleepless, yet smiling as well as he could, to those who molested him with talk, the young exile withdrew himself to the most retired part of the deck, and, as it was almost dead calm, riveted his eye and his whole soul on the still visible coast, till night shut it from his eye. Exhausted then, he sunk to sleep in the fine resplendent night, assured beforehand that the land would be visible still at daybreak. But his sleep was longer than he had believed;

he awoke with the joyous shoutings of the crew under a breeze sprung up; the cordage creaked, the vessel went cutting her white-green way with hissing force, all was hilarity and sunlight; but, alas! *land* was gone. William flew to his old position to be unobserved, hurried out his glass, to catch, if possible, one glimpse of his dear country, and Ronah's country, more—found all blank heaving of waves, a void horizon of mere sky; the very point where he would have imagined that part of the Welsh coast where all his wishes lingered, no longer even to be guessed! So intense were his feelings, so sudden the loss of the view of land, (little comfort as was that view while present!) that the unhappy young man sunk down and fainted away.

CHAPTER III.

We said heavier hours were at hand. News of the death of the ill-fated youth, before he could enter on his labours as missionary, reached Wales, at the moment of the old man's greatest trouble. Long time enough had elapsed since the parting of the lovers, to

tranquillise the feelings of Ronah into something like a melancholy pleasure under the absence of him she doated on; or rather, her mind had become in love with its grief.

In pure fictions, death or marriage form seemingly the natural conclusion to the story of lovers; but, besides that tradition *here* limits our range, there seems no good reason why a character may not exhibit various traits of interest, or go through many adventures, in the wedded or widowed state of heart. This young woman might be said to *begin* life with this melancholy privation, so new and exalted a state of feeling did it produce in her yet hardly fully developed mind.

Though there remained no hope for her heart,—the first intelligence of the ship "Fortune" also communicating the fact of her having left him in the first port at which she touched, where he died before she proceeded on her voyage,—Ronah exhibited little of that despair which it really struck to that heart to any observer, and to her watchful master, the preacher, none at all. How curious is the human mind, not only in its strengths and weaknesses, but the strange amalgamation of both! This young woman's mind had already become as enthralled to her new protector, by

its timidity, as it had formerly been to her harsh-tempered mistress, — so wholly subdued by awe of him, that not a quiver of lip or wild roll of her eye, on his bringing her the printed confirmation of the sad event, revealed that stroke of incurable pain, which, notwithstanding, her startled heart felt as certainly, as the actual substance of that heart could have done had he pierced it with a dagger. But when he took, and long held and strongly grasped her hand, in affected holy *pleasure*,—in which he called on her to join, while he said a long prayer,—pleasure, that "the godly youth had made so happy an end, as while thus risking life for the salvation of souls,"—there was something in his mixed whine, and sainted smile at her, and then at the ceiling, as his large eyes were upturned,—that overcame her awe by disgust. Not that he had yet ever made the advances of a lover, but she shrunk instinctively from something like fondling, which he made the sad intelligence he bore a pretence for. He knew that William had been always her chief friend and supporter under the old dame's displeasures.

Not a duty of the slightest kind did Ronah leave unfulfilled that dreadful day. It changed her nature, indeed; she became almost as a

machine in the performance; yet all was unchanged in the routine of her daily sphere: for, as her secret sweet hope, that always made her cheerful in her tasks, in spite of absence and all its occasional pangs, had never been visible, except by a little blush, and an absent bashful half smile, in thinking to herself, which would steal up without apparent cause,—so the bitter, the deadly despair, that really was creeping cold more and more over her bosom, revealed itself never but by a paleness, not of bodily ail, and a hollow half-groan, at which she herself would start; not of pain—not wholly of even pain of heart—but life-weariness. The task of thus going through life's toils without the supporting spirit of hope, would elicit from the keen-feeling yet passive creature, at last, such involuntary groan.

But, to judge of her character, let us advance a little in the period of her sorrow.

On a moonlight bank, not far from that hanging wood and well known rock-spring and its wild flowered cistern, behind the farm of Lwynmadoc, might often be seen two female figures. The home of this humble pair, a young fair woman, and one somewhat decrepid, was a very poor and rather ruinous cottage, near the substantial old farm-house, Lwynma-

doc, where almost all the days of Ronah had been spent. The present inmate of the hovel was no other than old Partridge, his means exhausted, his stock sold off, farm let to a stranger, and he in his old age become a labourer on his former grounds to that stranger.

The news of the death of her favourite William struck the unhappy mother, whom the preacher had over-persuaded to encourage the fatal adventure, with such remorse, that joined to mortified pride, poverty, and perhaps the perpetual missing of the society of Ronah, the shock was too much. She grew out of her musing into a state of frantic grief; then relapsed into a deeper gloom and constant sadness, in which her calls for Ronah were continual. Ronah, informed of the change, flew to her as to the kindest mother, suppressing all her own despair. Dame Partridge in her partial insanity received the much-desired girl with a violent fit of scolding, incoherent, but chiefly on the ground of her having deprived her, his mother, of the last hours she might have spent with William. A flood of tears followed Ronah's lively remembrance of that circumstance thus awakened. She recalled every look and tone. They hid themselves again behind the dense foliage of the hedge,

or the angle of wooded cliff that preserved them from the discovery of one of the rude brothers, hunting a strayed sheep,—she brought him the stealthy warm dinner in the wooden platters, she had secured for him with such anxious scheming, and kept *hot*, in bringing, with such serious anxiety,—the little keg of ale that she hid for him, in a gorse bush, sorely hurting herself to secure it, and then could not find the right bush again. All these little things rushed back on the sad girl's thoughts. She was now leading about the brokenhearted mother of him she loved, no longer proud or resentful. She was turning her eyes, no more to the sea, or the mountain road, for that dear companion, in hope of his return, or fluttering expectation of his town-graced sleek figure arriving for his holiday from the University,—but up—up to the sky!—not to *him*, but a spirit or angel, a dim ideal abstraction of mortality,—to that solemn void all round, which men call heaven, but whence never voice came, nor form looked down to say to the mourner, "The lost is *here!* The dreadful secret is no more a secret! He whom *you* call lost, is here, and here shall be your meeting place!"

But with the first burst of emotion on thus rejoining the helpless woman, Ronah's *outward*

weeping ceased; and with that first irascible outbreak of memory, on the part of the aged woman, *her* irritable mood too passed away; and, as the old people could keep no servant, Ronah resisting all the remonstrance of the preacher, her master, exchanged his easy service and comfortable home, for the sad task of tending the melancholy mad, and the cold poverty of a labourer's hovel. Yet was the change a very great relief to this affectionate girl's mind. She was now among mourner like herself. Poor old Partridge enjoyed his noonday meal, brought to him to eat out under a rock or hedge, far more for the little chat of his Rony "come home again," who forced herself into spirits on every such occasion. The satisfied self-complacency, and robust look of inward comfort, not *wholly* spiritual, of the jolly though grave man of the Gospel, had become grievous bad company for this widow-girl,—for truly widowed in heart she was,—herself spiritualized by grief, by the sudden wedding of her fancy, her wishes, her affections, to death and the hereafter, to all unearthly and shadowy and death-chill things, for her lost love's sake, following him everywhere that Fancy or Religion led, and living over the past with him, wherever Memory and Mourning wandered.

Hence, when leading or rather following the sad woman (in fear of her attempting suicide), who would never willingly lose sight of her, and seemed to be now spending on the patient girl, all the love justly due to her, but repressed by a froward irritable temper so many years, Ronah felt a mournful happiness, a "luxury of grief," that the presence of the preacher always poisoned with gross and loathsome ideas of the sensual and the "fat contented." Not that she was freed from his presence, for he was most assiduous in his attentions to the "stricken" one, as he called Mrs. Partridge, eternally adding to her gloom by gloomy cross-questioning about the movements of the spirit in her. But what tried Ronah's patience the most, was his constant and rather uncharitable allusion to this visitation of God (as less *enlightened* Christians deem madness), as palpably rather that of *the Devil.* He talked, "how busy Satan was with men, now-a-days, and what wicked promptings of his she exhibited," meaning those melancholy hints of self-destruction, which the mad often express, or movements that anxious friends construe into such design. He a little mollified his former servant's secret anger on these occasions, however, by assurances that her generous attentions, and *his own*, would

quickly restore the sufferer,—and "then," he hoped, "his home would no longer be as a place solitary for want of his little housekeeper." He so called her, and indeed kept an extra servant wench from her first coming.

The contrast between those three persons when together, was a study for a painter, at least as far as contrast is effective. As the two sat on the broad slab of rock stone, festooned with ivy, whence the moonlight sea was just visible, just audible up the long ravine (the situation being one of the few at all romantic in Anglesea), and the cry of a seabird over head, or its flitting across the deep blue, and all its paled stars, would draw the eyes of the white-faced young woman upwards, following its flight; and the poor tattered emblem of animal decay, bodily and mental, would mutter some words from the Burial Service to herself—(her usual habit,) which drew constant tears from the touched girl in her own secret sympathy,—as they thus sat or wandered, the ponderous step of the reverend man would be heard on the rocky ground, and his prominent perfect figure of manhood, well-fed, sleek-clothed, stood in its full worldly comfort, and almost life's prime, beside them. His habitual spiritual repose of manner, and

mock-indifference to this world, while so "*well* with it," seemed rebuked and exposed by the dreary reality of that state, in both figures by his side.

Those "white upturning eyes" of the younger mourner, however, were not always attracted by any object, into that peculiar look. It will be recollected that she engaged the unfortunate William, to *appear*, after death (if God's veiled law of death should allow,) in the shape of a bird—a raven.

It will be recollected also that this poor girl was born of a Catholic mother, and had been brought up by old Partridge in that faith, as far as a solitary situation allowed, in honourable fulfillment of a promise made to the mother on her death-bed.

Ronah met, during her bringing up, many of that creed from Ireland, travelling through Anglesea, and had heard many a superstitious legend, from such persons when hospitably lodged by her protector. Moreover, she had become possessed of a few old Popish books, in which miraculous matters were treated almost as things of course. The Lives of Saints presented divers examples of direct intercourse of the dead and living, of famishing holy men fed by birds in the desert, like Elijah;

and as these were *certain facts*, why might not a poor despairing girl's doting on the dead, her hunger of the heart for some little last communion with one no sooner known to love her than lost, hope such a boon from Mercy Infinite?

Thus she dreamed and wished, till she hoped, and her heart would almost leap at the sudden flitting of any dusky bird over head, till her very countenance took an upward cast, and her eyes an habitual roll upwards resembling the effect of real devotion—and devotion it was —but of the heart only, alas! and the object of her hope, hopeless as Heaven itself to the wicked. Yet joined to the growing pallidness of her look, and hollowness of eye, nothing could more resemble a sainted beauty than did this habitual expression. Nor could the humblest rustic office she might be performing detract at all from its beautiful effect. It even added to it. On the milking stool or at the spinning wheel, Ronah now almost deadly pale, though only sick in mind and heart, still appeared something bound to the earth but hardly of it—one whose abiding place was not here; though too deep a sadness, however subdued, sat on her aspect, to allow the hope that

the love of Heaven *alone* had cut off one so young from so beautiful a world.

There was also another object of mournful longing, which gnawed at her tender heart, and forbade it to rest even in despair. That was a letter which it appeared William Partridge had written to her on his death-bed, at the port where the ship had put in by stress of weather, and left him under a mortal disease to die among strangers. She had certain information that he had written such a letter, as well as one or more to his parents, but they never came to hand.

She longed vehemently to possess this his first and last love-letter—that awful depositary of dying words, so like a voice from his early grave, speaking to her. What would she give to have and hold it, to read night and day, and hold his hand-*writing!*—hold it even like his living hand, in her clammy one, in her dying moments,—to take with her into her shroud! What need she regard that they who should lay her out should learn that she, the poor "base born"—the "love-child" Ronah, was once loved by her elegant, kind, good, and lamented *college* cousin, the Reverend William Partridge? It appeared to her young fancy a

sort of immortality, to be found out as the object of such exalted fortune as the love of one so superior to her, after death.

Alas, for both those melancholy hopes! No letter arrived—no raven fluttered to her bosom! she even drew a mad hope from the failure of her lover's promise, that his soul had *not* flown, though the evidence was beyond doubt.

It happened, unfortunately for old Partridge, that all those neighbours who most befriended him in his poverty, by finding for him easy labours, and helping him to get in the product of a field or two he still retained, were attached followers of the Methodist minister, went to no other chapel, dealt with no other tradesman in his line.

As time rolled on and Ronah still declined to return to his house, the preacher having partly avowed his "honourable" views, as he called them, provided she would re-enter his service, inasmuch as relief from domestic management through "taking unto himself a wife," would allow his undivided service to be offered to his "Master"—his smothered wrath grew less capable of suppression. He had believed that such a stooping from his pride of place on his part, would at once end the matter; that she would eagerly return with such a promotion in pros-

pect as that from his service to his bed. Hence his pride felt a wound as well as his passion a damp, in her even increased reluctance. Yet such was her total prostration of spirit and self-abandonment, that the grief-weary persecuted girl was almost ready to return, for the sake of peace, and her uncle's good, who might suffer by the cabal which the minister made among his neighbours against his obstinacy in "keeping her to slave for a madwoman and himself," as they said.

One day, as Evan Partridge was at a sheep-shearing down by a river, and Ronah was trying to spare him some labour, he being rheumatic, by assisting to seize the sheep new washed, the preacher came by, looking askance his anger at both. Presently a whole party of females, chiefly farming persons, the zealous friends of the preacher, appeared, and surrounded the oak, at the foot of which the old man sat clipping a sheep. The crazy wife skulked in a little wood the while, with that shy aversion to society which marks the melancholy mad.

It was an old maid of "serious" principles, that always wept the loudest of the whole congregation, that opened the attack. The old man's colour came to his cheek, who had long forgot such mindly emotions, at sight of this

female embassy, but whether in his simple nature's shyness or some touch of anger is uncertain.

"Indeed, I 'm ashamed of you, Evan Partridge," the sallow scraggy lengthy figure began, who had some painful complaint on her, that increased the soured severity of her look, and the twinkle of her vixen eyes, while her person also at once writhed with pain and passion,—"D'ye resist the Word of the Gospel, d'ye set *your* worldly will against the will of the minister of the Gospel? and such a minister! Fye **for* shame, fye *for* shame on thee, Evan Partridge, and thee too for no better than you should be,—aye, thee may well look down—folk see a cloven foot by looking down sometimes: but as for your uncle there—God forgive me for calling him so! when thy father never was at church with thy mother—as for you, old man, I say *you* ought to know better than vex such a man, and deprive that poor wretch of her bread, and the bread of the Word of Life too, which I 'm sure she wants sore enough!" The voice of Dame Partridge then came fierce, sudden, and shrill out of the wood, she still hid among the

* This stress is always laid on the preposition in this common phrase of reproach, by the rustic Welsh.

underwood—"You lie, you lie, I tell you, *Miss* Judy Pugh, as they call thee—Judy Pug, I do call thee, for ye're like an old cross monkey. She *don't* want it, I say; *you* want it. She's *not* base born! well, if she be, I loved her, poor dear, for all that. If *I* called her so, *you* shaln't. Name of the world! see the family *I* come of, and I do love her to my heart I do, and always did—and see what *you're* sprung of, and *you'll* make her cry, will ye? Never mind, my wench, don't cry *for* her! My poor boy's coming back yet when he has gathered all that gold and fine silver ore I saw last night on the sea-side lying, and then I won't be any more against his having you, for you're a good girl. But there lay a dead man with his blue lips,—oh!—that the sharks had gnawed, close by it all as it shined glorious. God send it be not *his*, poor fellow! But he shouldn't have spent a whole day—the last! along with you, and not an hour with his poor old mother, should he now? You must own that, my dear. And now he'll never find me again in my senses—and we're all gone poor! It's too late now!"

"There's talk! there's the devil's promptings!" Mrs. Pumpkin began, now taking up the harangue which Miss Pugh was too transported with anger (the more because she was ashamed to vent it on a maniac) to renew——

Mrs. Pumpkin, a large red-faced elderly widow, of good substance, but vulgar, and quite a patroness of the evangelical priesthood. "I do guess you think that wench will edify wastly by such talk as that ar in her ears, instead of our minister's, don't ye?"

"Oh, Ma—Ma—Ma'am!" Partridge began, a little recovering from his dumb dismay, but stuttering more than usual, and all in a tremble, "Don't, don't, don't—if ye *please*, don't la—la—lay on my poo—poo—poor wife the fault of foo—foo—fool—foolish talk, when it's God's own doing, poo—poo—poor affl—afflicted creature."

"*Afflicted!* more wicked than mad—She do know what she says and does very well, and she ought to be put in the dark and be strapped to the bedstick or some'ut, not let insult folk, that gait. Why the old man's *doted*, clean doted! What for don't ye let the wench go? and I am sure if our minister *can* fancy such a curd-faced thing, with her head drooping one side and t' other—name of God! man, what d' ye think of yoursel to hinder her of a *catch* like our minister?—a man, though I say it that 's a widow, and done with such things, that a woman would run after like a dog after a hare in full scent—a jolly man, a proper man, a fresh-coloured man! let alone his being a man of God too."

"Yes, Mister Partridge," said very softly another *lady*, with peony cheeks and full-blown figure, the formal widow of a supervisor of Excise, who had lived much in a large town, and piqued herself on manners, and extreme sanctity—though a little tainted in repute by some scandal about a bailiff on her jointure farm—"Yes, Mister Partridge, I *must* say, though it is *no* business of *mine*, that it's a *cruel* thing to keep that *poor* thing from a service, and from such luck as they do *say* is in her way, if that good man be not thwarted in his generosity toward her. There 's no accounting for tastes, else one wouldn't believe it that *such* a man would'nt prefer a little more colour, and a little more flesh, more *goodlookingness* like, and some nice farm property well secured, to a poor girl, and a bas——but God forbid I should hurt any body's feelings, base born or well born—but I say *if* Mr. Bull *can* fancy her,—look at *your* house, your *hovel!* now *do*, Mr. Partridge, and look at *his!*"

"The more good sweet girl she, to stop with *us* poor creatures, old and mad! and she *shalln't* go till she likes, for all o' ye!" old Partridge broke out, letting his sheep jump up and decamp, and quite forgetting his stammer, as his blood grew warm.

"Oh, let him alone," the rich patronising *lady* resumed; "I knew what *faith* there was in Evy Partridge, even in his better days—small's the meat, or meal, or food for man or beast, that *he* did ever send, when our preachers were pouring in on all sides of the town, at a great camp Meeting, and all were to be kept, and their horses too, and kept *well* too—and to be sure so they ought to be. *I've* spent a mint of money in keeping 'em, let alone almost building a chapel—and to be sure, who *should*, if we heiresses don't? Why don't you go to your sarvice of *yourself*, you white fool?" she concluded, fiercely and suddenly twirling Ronah round, who was crying with her head against the oak, to stare her in the face.

"Why, though it's no business of *mine*," recommenced Mrs. Bumford, in a slow soft voice, "I *must* say, as Mrs. Pumpkin *has* named it, that I have, *with my own eyes*, seen *you*, Evan Partridge——"

"Oh, let me go, dear father," (thus she used to call him,) Ronah whispered her uncle from behind the large trunk of the tree; "I'd *better* go! it won't be for long, don't affront 'em all for *me*."

"See 'em all d——d first!" old Partridge broke out aloud.

"Do ye hear him? how he *swore?*" Miss Judy Pugh shrieked like a sudden pea-hen.

——"Seen you *with my own eyes,* Mister Partridge, running after two sheep in *meeting-time,* of a *Lord's Day!*"

"Why, woman! was my ship (sheep) to be buried in the snow, because *he* was preaching? Do ye thi—think I did wade in the drifts and sludder down the ice of the fa—fa—face of the hill, all for my pleasure? The woman be daft!"

"Nay, nay, Evan," said the lady patroness again, "you was all*ways* for the world and for yourself, I *tell* you, you *was!* Will ye contradict *me?* You're not in that great farm now, you know! You did make a God of Mammon as they say. I've known you go and buy your shop tea and your bacca and every thing at a shop where the man always went to the Steeple-house, and walk with your basket full of things by the *very door* of the shop of our preacher, (that's gone to his exceeding great reward, good man!) and you'd not mind letting him know you'd been dealing with folk that live without God in the world; and all because you might buy your trumpery a little bit cheaper, mayhap, or finer, or bigger for your money! Oh fye, fye! And for such a nasty, selfish, worldlywise trick, you would'nt mind forsaking the man who

rained manna in the wilderness of your poor barren faith, into your mouth—into your ears, I would say—but I wont spend my breath upon ye!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said a small tenant of the last speaker, who was under great obligation to Partridge in former times, having been his servant, but now sought to please his landlady, "and mind if you come to *our* vestry for relief, Effy, *we* shall remember how you behaved to-day to this good lady."

"D——n your relief! and *you* be d——d too for a blackhearted rascal, an ungrateful rascal!" old Partridge broke forth, throwing his shears to a great distance, "and a poor sneaking rascal. I've paid my way, and fed *you*, you dog! when an idle servant, at my board off the best. And I tell ye all, (what d'ye come mobbing me for?) I tell the whole squad of ye I don't care for ye one hair of this dear child's locks, and I wouldn't cause her the tears you have this day, to save my life hardly! I've nought to say against her master, no more has she; but where she likes to be there she shall be, and if so be she could fancy *your* fancy man, why I should be glad enough to see her housed before I die. For me, I shall soon be out of all your way: but mind! not a minute sooner

for all your nonsense and worry. My wife's mad, my boys are out and don't care or think about *me;* the poor boy that *did* is dead and gone; so here I am! do your worst! not a sheep more will I shear this day! the devil go along with all of ye!" So saying, he dragged Ronah, with him and disappeared.

Such a cabal was formed against the poor broken-down man, through the women, and the farmers, their friends, that Ronah saw with agony the approach of many and aggravated evils towards him whom she loved with all the fondness of a child. In spite of her repugnance to the step, her desire to remain with the unfortunate old couple, her terror of the emboldened advances of the suitor-master, she suddenly took her resolve, acted on it, and became once more an inmate of his detested, though comfortable abode.

Things went, however, very ill with the old man. Grown more fretful under the absence of his adopted daughter and increased malady of his dame, who drooped for want of her really loved and ever-watchful attendant, poor Partridge became perfectly reckless: he returned tenfold every affront put upon him by the insolence of the leading men of his parish. Hence in his old age, with all his placid good-nature, that had kept peace under all his wife's

frowardness, he found himself involved in an unequal war with those who had almost the power to starve him and drive him out from under human roof. And they did all but exert that power.

And now at last did the unfortunate girl, whose heart bled for all this, and who would hold her altered benefactor's grey head to her bosom like a child's, while she wept over it, to lull and soften that exasperated and outraged nature of his into something of its old placidity —now at last did she desire the ghostly visit of her lost lover, not for love only, but the wish to feel full assurance that his soul *was* departed, that she might sacrifice herself to what she deemed mere lust in a man she loathed.

It was long before Mr. Ralph Bull forgave his tenant's servant. But this his sullenness was a respite to her. Her return at last seeming voluntary, though really through fear of him and his influence, he at last resumed his sweetnesses toward her, and openly sought her affection.

We have seen how the "minister" personally enjoyed the good graces of his "flock," as he called them. Hence, his vanity being fed by their opinion of his personal attractions, he believed that Ronah could not fail to see him

with their eyes, and waited the time for her mourning to subside, for he was too shrewd not to detect the sad secret of her heart.

His holy character gave him a vexatious power of indulging those endearments she so loathed (though afraid to repel them), which no other master would have possessed.

He assumed the right of impressing a kiss, merely as her spiritual father, on her pale lips every night at parting. When he prolonged the contact of lips so as to become fulsome to her, and she almost fancied the spirit of her dear love, in the bird's or some other shape, looking at her through the casement leaves, or trees, and recoiled, and burst into tears of vexation and grief—he was nothing perturbed, nothing abashed. It was enough to turn on her that well-practised smile which he turned on his female flock in his conventicle, to pat her cheek with the words "Poor lamb! poor child! the Lord be with you, and send pleasant dreams to your bed, my love!" and he was "himself again;" the holy man! Then an upward roll of the eyes, where, in spite of him, something of the grossest voluptuousness would peep in its half-veiled sleepiness of look, as it again turned down and wandered over her person, concluded the leave-taking, and puzzled the poor girl in

her opinion of him so much, that sometimes she really returned his salute with the fulness of filial feeling the most pure, and presently recoiled from it, as her artlessness misled him, and putting him off his guard, led to further fondling, too warm to be mistaken even by innocence, for *spiritual* love.

Such was the situation of Ronah Partridge when stealing to the moonlight ruin of the church of Llanddwyn, as described on her first introduction to the reader.

The walls of this church, nearly buried in the sands, had long had more attraction for her dreary fancy than those which afforded a nominal home to her person. In truth, if any edifice could be called a *home* for a broken heart, it was this mournful antiquity, nearly quite demolished by the union of many elements of destruction; a bleak exposure to the sea wind, frequent high floods, the accumulating sand-drifts burying it even before its date by natural decay, and time the more gradual burier of all things.

It had for a Catholic also peculiar interest. In former days, when Saints had their day, the votive offerings of poor love-lorn maidens, as well as those of fond wives, whose husbands were at sea, to the Saint Dwynwen (pronounce

this Welsh Venus's name who can!) were so many, that it became one of the richest shrines in North Wales, and formed a bone of contention between laity and clergy at the Reformation.

Now—*sic transit gloria mundi!*—the cormorant and the peregrine falcon make a resting place of its few walls that surmount the sand hills, ever rising over them. The little plain of scanty briny grass on which it stands mouldering, is secluded on the land side by almost a circumvallation of rocks; the wide sea is all in front, with its lifelessness, and the lonely nook it occupies is almost as untrodden as that sea. Some subterranean remains of vaults, or apartments which the long driving of the showers of sea sand has rendered now subterranean, cause echoes and mysterious noises there, when it is blowing hard, which, joined to the shrill mournful whistling of marine plants, especially the strong sea holly, whose prickly leaves clash with a noise at such time, like that of a tree's twigs when sheathed in ice, add to the withering influence of the scene on the awed mind, aiding that world-forgetful mood and those ruminations on a future state, which would be likely to possess the melancholy person, who should find relief in becoming a frequent companion of gulls, shrieking cormorants,

and breaking waves, and burying billows of sea sand, in such a place for despair.

For Ronah—as attached to the creed which had once made that wild site the depositary of wealth, as the haunt of mourners of old like herself, but less hopeless—(for the saint, even while surviving proud in the odour of sanctity, had no restoration for the dead—"the torch of Venus burns not for the dead")—for Ronah this spot had strange fascination. Every twilight, when she could find or make two hours' leisure (and her lover master was very indulgent), did she run herself out of breath, merely to gain a few minutes longer time to sit here, alone on the bare sand, and look, through the rifts of the wind-beat walls, across that waste, on whose far, far off shore, somewhere, was the unvisited, stranger-trampled grave of her first love, where never mourner had stood, on which never one sprig of evergreen had been planted.

It was while full of such thoughts she leaned on one skeleton of some dwarf tree, which had upgrown and lived out its date within the walls, that the figured blackness of a bird's form, motionless, perched on the remains of a window place, betwixt her and the moon just going down in the sea-distance, caught her eye.

Her emotion, her outstretched arms, her incredulous wonder, as the bird would not be scared away by the action—her awe when discovering that it was a raven—her indecision, between fear of driving it away, and awed natural fear of *proving* its supernatural nature, by touching it and finding it would not fly away—her ultimate, desperate advance of her hand to settle the dreadful question—its familiarity, and her fainting, were all described.

And now it behoves us to describe her recovery.

She looked about wildly in the moonlight area, and all its shadows. "Ah, my God! my God! it's gone—*he's* gone! What am I saying? The *bird's* gone, *my* bird's gone. Sure I'm mad—William!"

The wind blew shrilly through the apertures, and some echo almost responded "William!" which her agitation did not recognize as but her own voice and something like a delirium, (which she knew to be delirium, yet gave belief to, like the clearest inward voice of reason,) tyrannised over her whirling mind during some few minutes.

Presently the awful yet humble object was at her side again, close to her very hand! Bolder now, as if growing familiarised to this new acquaintance with the world of spirits, she very

tenderly (while she still shook in every limb) touched the bird, then cautiously took it in both hands—gazed intensely, shuddered, and all at once, smothered its soft plumage, its head, its wings with kisses, applied its horny beak to her lips—then laid it to her breast: but not a tear came to her eye, where horror still sat, mixed with a strange softening, such as might come abashed to the eyes of those feeling, indulging, yet loathing some forbidden passion.

Again she exclaimed, holding it at arm's length, drawn from her bosom—"Ah, dear God! What am I doing? A raven—an ugly bird! No voice, no eyes, no human nature! A beak, a beak! Ah, darling love, dearest soul, William! or whatever's your name in that dreadful heaven, that distance, distance, silence—speak to me only once, to tell me, *are* you, indeed, here? Is your own very soul here, my life? Speak to me through this creature—if one miracle, many may be—tell me if I *ought* to *kiss* this thing, as I *must*, so, and so, and so!" and again she devoured it with kisses. "Oh, yes, is not it the *very bird* that *was* to be? I'll kiss it, and die kissing!" So raving, Ronah again smothered it with her cold kisses, for she was tottering in deadly faintness; the gentle bird, which exhibited all the traits of

recognition, shivering its wings and even returning her kisses, with what return a bird could make, repeatedly gently pecking between those lips, white as at the very hour of dying, through the horror mixed with deep despair that overwhelmed her, under this sad last assurance that William's soul was no more in that fair body, which she had hung her arms on but once in her life; and all that death allowed, in his niggard mercy, (though that miraculous,) was but such a revolting, doubtful, unnatural, unsatisfying communion as this! human lips and a horny beak, a warm, wishing, devoted human being, and a sable, dumb, lowly creature of the desert and of prey!

At last the gentle thing of mystery, stretched its wing for flight, and she caught a glimpse of its figure flapping heavily away through the ruinous rift in the wall, just discernible by the last lunar twilight, lingering blood-tinged, shot from the point where the last segment of the enlarged orb had just disappeared beneath the sea.

A new agony succeeded, almost a parting agony in the poor girl's half maniacal state of mind between scepticism and confidence in the supernatural character of the incident. For no sooner was it gone than the last sentiment

took full possession of her mind, and she wildly cried out after it, "Stay, stay! Ah, then, farewell! farewell! for evermore farewell! Oh, that *I* too, *I* too—" Tears came at last to her relief, as the hysteric passion choked her utterance. And now she gave up her welcome, dear, dreadful visitor for lost, and with difficulty reached home at a late hour.

It is not to be supposed that superstition could very long quite overpower the good sense this untutored young woman possessed as a gift of Nature.

Hence, when she came to ruminate on the event, during her shuddering night, (for she could not resist a sort of looking for, in spite of reason, of some fresh revelation from the unknown world) she at last persuaded herself that the familiarity of the bird, (the very bird of her own choice too!) was referrible to *some* natural cause. This persuasion was more melancholy than the contrary—and she yearned with passionate longing for one more visit of the doubtful comforter. "And will it never be?" she thought. "Yet why not? If the heavenly pity *has* heard his prayer, *has* for once again, as often in the old times—allowed a soul that hath left the flesh, to revisit its

poor pining fellow prisoner still bound in it, why mayn't it be allowed also to stop for it a little while, till it also may escape? I think mine will not be long—I feel my body waste and strength fail, daily, though I tell nobody—and it pleases me to feel. Perhaps it will come again to me—to-morrow I'll be there again come what will!" She looked 'twixt the bed curtains, impatient for day, and a glimmer of dawn was just visible, and by its doubtful invasion of the dusk of a very antique room heavy-beamed with the smallest window, and that dimmed by a depth of projecting thatch, she saw, past doubt, a small dark body pass quickly along the floor, which could not be a rat from its breadth of figure, and besides that she caught a fluttering sound, and instantly felt the fanning of the air in her face; and in the next moment, perched on an old cheese-chest by her bed, stood the raven!—the feathered apparition—the living disguise of a departed soul! The window was a wooden lattice, of smallest interstices, such as is still frequent in secluded antique farm-houses,—it could not have entered that way; neither by door, for it was secured, nor by chimney, for there was none. Its appearing thus simultaneous with her wish, its presence palpably

unaccountable except by such belief, Ronah no longer withheld full belief in its supernatural nature, and her whole external bearing henceforth took a new character—that of one distinguished to herself from the living, while yet alive, by a solemn, never-to-be-spoken, premature acquaintance with the grave, and its glorious though dreadful secret.

Yet did she in no wise slacken in her ordinary dutiful vigilance as a superintendant of her master's house; for the belief thus confirmed served to tranquillize her spirits, and fixing her whole thoughts on the hour of her own soul's release, which she fancied announced as near by this solemn visit, she grew the more reckless about the brief intervening disposal of its fleshly prison, as she now considered her despised person.

She grew accustomed to the awe which the sight of this sable wonder at first sent shuddering through her frame, till it was almost lost in the tenderness that fearfully grew and grew toward the creature, or rather the tangible symbol of a dear, departed soul; till her wild spiritualized secret kisses of its glossy smoothness, came to be impressed with the same holy calm, with which she kissed the little crucifix of humble bone she wore suspended from her neck,

but concealed in thankfulness to Jesus, whose mediation she believed had procured her this signal mark of Heaven's attention to the humble though wild prayer of a sufferer.

Meanwhile, the disappearances and short returns of her bird (she began to dare to call it *hers*) were of the same wonderful character as just related; at once proving the miracle and sustaining the solemnity of their intercourse, which would hardly have been, under a constant domestication of so commonplace a creature as *seemed* to be this lowly, living, receptacle of a hovering though loosed spirit.

CHAPTER IV.

Never were changes so great and surprising, as those in the character of Evan Partridge in the last of his days. The least of these was his totally losing his impediment of speech, though the most surprising to his neighbours. A constitutional nervous diffidence was its origin, which maintained its influence so long as a mind at ease, at least about vital matters, remained vacant enough to be alive to such petty anxiety about the ridiculous or grotesque

in his own habits, and the opinion of those he might chance to talk with. But now, when vital anxiety, and a late battle with the world, and all engrossing and stormy thoughts were his lot, night and day, the old infirmity of his more delicate days and hours of heart's ease, slipped from recollection, and he could be voluble in fury. His nature rose up from a rest of a lifetime, (for Partridge had scarcely known trouble, except from his wife's tongue, before,) like a bedridden man on an alarm of fire, and advance of the flames, who derives a wonderful power from the disastrous occasion that paralyses others. So his character, instead of sinking under the "whips and scorns of Fortune and the proud man's contumely," rebounded from the crush, and was "thrice itself."

To Ronah only he remained the same, nay gentler. Such was his doteing on this daughter of his adoption, that he still retained towards her somewhat of that over-anxiety and fear of being ridiculous, on which his infirmity was founded, so that with her alone he still stammered, though in less degree.

Without entering into the pathological mystery of the thing, Ronah found comfort even in this slight re-appearance of his old simple gentle character, in the aged man who had been so

very kind to her, while her very heart bled at the spectacle of so old and afflicted a man, once so patient, now often trembling at once with rage and weakness, his hands clenched in fury, his loosed tongue seconding his rage, his person in rags, and his perverted pride of desolate despair, glorying almost in that sad extremity of his lot, as proof of his defiance—even to nakedness, perhaps death—of those who would trample on him because he was fallen. He felt that good-nature to a fault, over-indulgence to the weak pride of a wife, had brought him down to this. His two surviving sons turned out cruel and undutiful, and besides were far away, since the dispersion of the family by the ruinous mining failure.

Poor William would have been a stay and a blessing, but he was gone. He had no more a companion in his wife, no more a home to hide his own head, much less one in which to enjoy the society of his good and dear foster child.

Thus desolate, desperate, the unhappy man, feeling that he had not long to live, nor one comfort in that little of life to come, would bear not one affront, as knowing he had nothing worse to fear by indulging a just or even excessive resentment of it, and thus, *turned* to bay at

last, as it were, after retreating back quite to the very door of death, and there fought, (who had never fought before,) desperately, even wantonly, as one who flies when assaulted by enemies or thieves on the highway, yet turns boldly to defend himself when he reaches his own door, where he has but to knock and a sanctuary is open to him.

It was now necessary that his wife should be removed to a wretched ruinous receptacle for paupers, to keep the company of two or three more such helpless beings; for the old man had an enemy in every taskmaster, or he thought so, and a quarrel usually sprung before half-a-day's work was done, the issue of which was, that he threw it up in defiance,—so that he procured not enough by labour even to feed and shelter himself.

But some part of this misery was soon to be relieved. Ronah was now living in the house of the preacher no longer as his servant, but his tacitly affianced bride. She had received now that awful assurance of her lover's fate, for which she deferred the consent to an union which would at least allow her to relieve her foster parents, for the minister had considerable property, and her previous residence under his roof had perhaps lessened the horror

or something like it, which she would have felt at all at once passing from a melancholy life passed with the parents of her lost lover, into the novel state—more painful far—of loveless matrimony. Cold and sick at heart, a gentle hypochondriac, as she was become, and all passion blighted as by "the old age," it was no such violent step to pass from the state of humble handmaid to the man, who alone offered her a home, to that of a passive object of his affections and feelings, such as they might be.

The supple minister of the Gospel, notwithstanding his zeal in the reformed faith, had permitted himself to connive at the errors of the pretty papist, not doubting, as he told his intimates, that his authority as her husband would prove sufficient to convert her, which indeed he assigned as his chief inducement to seeking her in marriage. In the meanwhile the humble girl never presumed to refuse joining in any prayers put up, as she thought in sincere devotion, and there were none that her innocence, judging others by herself, did not think sincere.

As she was washing her dairy vessels one day, at a stream which crossed a lone bye-way in a deep shady bottom on the preacher's farm, she was terrified at the sudden starting out of

the wood, of the old man Partridge, who hurrying up, with a laugh held up his two hands, to shew that handcuffs were upon them! Ronah screaming left a bowl floating away on the brook, which he shewed her very composedly, then withdrew her with him, from the lane to a concealed spot.

"The rascal! I 've *served* him, old as I be—don't look so pitiful, my child, I've done nought but what I'm proud of—how you tremble! Only an assault matter, love—the first, at my years, *is* funny! You 're old enough to remember that sly fawning lad that lived servant fellow with us so long—I took him, a little lump * from the parish, and did by him as if he 'd been my own; and now that 's he that is overseer this year, ye know, and he that won't be agreeable to our poor dame being allowed her trifle a week any longer, to keep her from going to that madhouse place. All the rest of the vestry would but he—so I knocked him down, all on a sudden. 'Take that, Davy,' that was every word I said. You can remember the time he went away, at any rate; and don't you remember how our dame, for all she 's so *curst—used* to be, poor soul! I

* A common *Welshly* expression.

mean—was just crying, when he had gathered all his things in his bundle, he 'd been with her so long? And this is the way he does by her now!"

Poor Ronah, in tender agony, strove vainly with all her force to undo the dreadful fetter, so new to both, but horrible also only to her. In a minute the constable and another, from whom he had escaped, (the offence having been committed in the neighbourhood,) were hurrying past.

"Thank God! they don't see us," she whispered, but Partridge had only desired to see her before he went to prison, (as no one would bail him,) and having seen her he was content. So, bidding her make herself quite easy, while with difficulty he passed over her head the circle of his linked arms, so as to embrace her neck at parting, before they should prevent him, he hallooed after them, joked them on his outwitting them, and their being about to pass him, and surrendered himself.

Ronah had felt an unconquerable repugnance to asking any favour of Mr. Bull; but on this occasion she supplicated, and with tears, the loan of two guineas, which complainant demanded as the condition of forgiveness. The preacher demurred. "My wages—" she faltered, "I believe there 's as much as that

coming:—but I shall *feel* it the same as if you *gave* it me."

He patted her cheek, smiling a meaning, but not what she waited for, almost with gasping—consent; yet he affected to be hurt at her thus again lowering herself into the sphere of a servant, from that of his intended wife. "Wages!" he repeated, leering on her, "how long are we to go on as master and servant? How long before you let me say to you, if I may be pardoned by *my* Master for such a lowly use of those blessed words, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy *lord*.'"

"Oh, sir," she said, weeping with vexation, "it 's a long way my dear father has to go to-night, if he *must* go—pray answer!—it is but that petty sum put in the constable's hand and he 'll be free, and never, never do so again!"

"But why so hasty with the gold, my dear? Will nobody bail him? Let me see, there is such a terrible spirit in the old gentleman, you see; but that 's favourable in one sense, for he 'd no more get out o' the way at the sessions from standing his trial than a lion would run away from a sheepfold; therefore, I marvel exceedingly that nobody will bail him."

"Oh, that would be but putting off the thing,

and it hanging over his head; and he that never was *threatened* with a gaol! The *poor* old man!"

Ultimately, the tender girl blushing, trembling, as directly as her confusion allowed, gave him to expect that the wedding-day should be at his own dictation, would he free her father, as she called him, that very night. Yet did avarice, or an unreasoning desire to retain money in his own hands as long as possible, (which does *not at all* characterize the Welsh people,) induce him to forego this opportunity, though his eyes devoured her at the promise. Affecting wholly to regard *her* interests, in not rashly consenting to the man's demand,—"For who knows," said he, "but he may be acquitted? and there would be two guineas lost!" he limited his kindness to becoming bail for the old man himself. Ronah thus learned how little she had to hope from him in the way of relief to her friends; yet did the worthy minister urge her implied consent to *his* fixing their wedding-day, with the same confidence as if he on his part had fulfilled the condition.

The dreaded day of the old man's appearing to take his trial for an assault in a court of justice approached. The preacher was become very sullen under the girl's breach of her word,

as he called it, in still deferring the day of their union. Besides this ground of pique, she had not scrupled to "raise" her wages, (as the Welsh servant-nymphs express it,) which she devoted to keeping the poor, half-childish, half-maniacal old woman, a while longer in the same cot with the old man. The time, however, was close, when that aged pair must divide, each on their respective disastrous way; she to a sort of ruinous poorhouse, he to a prison: for, unless through the preacher, there was no chance of his offence being expiated otherwise, and almost as little of his paying the penalty sure to be inflicted, unless he should be *previously* the husband of Ronah. The latter, in her extreme terror, long urged the easy old man to absent himself before the sessions, but he was almost enraged at the advice.

Partridge was not a strong character; his stature of scarcely middle height, fairly represented his mental stature also. The constant openness of his countenance, joined to its good humour, a little inclined to vacancy; yet, the weather-beaten roughness of his peasant frame, proved that his body had at least been always active, and his humble, but excellent warm grey coat, worn through every season, and coarse as a labourer's when he was in a good thriving way,

bespoke him a plain careful Welsh mountain farmer. His blue eye was almost too gentle and soft for that of a man, and his demeanour too boyish and sportive for manhood's years; yet there was a twinkle of a sleeping fire in it, when anything roused him very much, *and his wife was not present*, whose presence always kept his passions in check, which hinted that he might not be always the gentle and quiescent being he had appeared from his youth upwards. The indignity of the handcuffs rankled in his soul. "I can feel for *thee*, poor creature! though thou can'st not for *me*, nor never will more," he had muttered, when, on the officer coming to take him and putting them on, the child-like woman looked on calmly, and caught but a faint conception of the drift of what was passing.

And now, as if to aggravate the unhappy girl's distress, arrived the long delayed letter from the luckless William, written in his last illness, and thus long deferred through various casualties occurring to the person, a countryman of his own, who was to be the bearer. He brought also a letter for the father, addressed to him in his old good farm, and expressing all the hopes of his mother's health, and his father's and his brothers', natural to the occasion, without even a word of worldly matters; for

the accursed bit of ore which had proved so ruinous, had not then been found on the little freehold. It was affecting to read this dumb comment on the blindness of men and transitory nature of human things, thus arrived at last; but the hand that wrote—dead, and the whole family to which it referred, dispersed and beggared ere it arrived.

But not less shocking to the tender girl, was the kind secresy, and knowing good-humoured leer, with which the old sailor, who was the bearer, searched her out; he having been so charged by the careful lover as he lay sick in the distant port, as if there had been still any purpose in that secresy, or anything but a sad and fatal recollection left to her from that unhappy attachment!

Meanwhile, the strange fitful visits of the raven at long intervals, maintaining thus its mystery of character, kept up in her mind a disposition to identify love with religion; for, to offer the incense of something like devotion, to an object of the human passion, and humanise with passionate tenderness an object of the religious passion, whether a soul, a Saviour, or the Virgin, seems a characteristic of Catholicism. The religion of Ronah had been of necessity left to the casual guidance of some

enthusiast of its creed, some poverty-stricken or cashiered Popish priest, landing at Holyhead to seek better fortunes in England, or the many migrating Irish poor, who found a few days' work at the Welsh farm-houses on their way for the approaching harvest of England. Hence, the spirit of religion in such a girl, and the spirit of love, such death-stricken love as her's, were hardly to be distinguished; and when she clasped the black object to her bosom, and bared its heaving snow to feel the touch of its glossed plumage, turning, by its sable contrast, that beautiful white into "snow thrice bleached," and while so holding, rolled up two wet eyes to the evening star, and just faltered a note of a hymn to the Virgin, then kissed the even yet distrusted object, that seemed the coffin of her lost love endued with a strange vitality, the prison of a soul muffled in its fluttering black—I say, it would have been hard to decide whether, while

> "Her bosom to the wind was only bare,
> Like snow-hills glistening in the moon's pale light,"

'twas

> "Love himself smiled soft and panted there,"

actual woman's love, or the mystic tenderness of that peculiar devotion to which chance had attached her. Probably both reigned equal. Add to this, the strange melancholy of the

desolate scene where she loved to resort, a shrine in ruins, and further saddened by its site, mouldering away, and, as it were, ever sinking into the earth, by the ever-gathering hillocks of sand, which, rising all round and forming real valleys between, gave to land the loneliness of sea, and the desolate wildness, only distinguished by a toilsome footing being allowed to the tread, and a sprinkling of spear-grass, and uncouth weeds covered with brine, each solitary—like a real mass of the sea's own dusky vegetation—to the eye; and one cannot wonder that a mere Welsh country maiden, as she became in her master's domicile, was *transfigured*, while alone, with her bird, her crucifix, her broken heart, her memory and her God—drooping amid ruins, and listening to the immense sound of the sea's breaking all along an uninterrupted shore—transfigured into something allied to the sublime, at least to spiritualized human nature, whose home seemed not of this world.

CHAPTER V.

DURING her agonized irresolution to appoint a day for her wedding prior to that of the old man's trial, now very near, the minister spoke in this manner. He smiled, with a Wesleyan benignity, on her still, while the bitterness of wounded vanity corrugated his aspect, in despite of long practice of the "economy" of the countenance: he was pale with spite, and his lip quivered—still he smiled—and his speech was sanctified in the extreme.

"My pretty handmaiden, did I view thee only with the carnal eye of filthy concupiscence —were I like other men, seeking only mine own pleasure, and not that of my blessed Master, whose service, I think, will be less broken by my entrusting a prudent bit of womankind enough, like thee, with my domestic interests—if I could be jealous, if I could be offended by *you*—if I could lean for happiness on such a reed as the *love* of a woman—ha, ha, ha! instead of the love of Jesus—I say, child, in that case, it would be doubtful whether you and I, even

far as we've gone, would ever become one flesh!"

Ronah turned away her head, leaning it on her hand, as she sate drooping there to make tea for him, while his pipe and jug of strong *cwrrw* were not discarded for the "slop's" sake, so that his talk was slow, and broken by whiffs of tobacco, and frequent expectoration into the spittoon, still under his tea-table. She shuddered at his last gross words, for it seemed the pleasure of this man to adopt extempore, whatever in Scripture has a holy and spiritual application, to whatever is most coarse and grossly matter-of-fact in human doings. A fine blush however came over her cheek, in that most beautiful posture of the female face, when the soft smooth convex of the cheek in the gentle turn of the neck, and that neck a little more exposed by such turn, and the polish of the well-rounded smooth-covered lower jaw, and the light of an eye but half of it visible—complete a voluptuous profile, which a gazer may enjoy without being observed, or a lover *observed* (by that sly reverted half eye) without the fair coquette seeming bold, in permitting such observation.

The preacher interpreted that blush after some principle of his own, for, taking her hand, he grew mollified wondrously.

"Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!" he continued, "yes, we will realise that holy saying yet, I was about to say that I should be jealous both of the quick and the dead, had I not crucified the old man in me, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. I say, that first, you would hardly believe the dead, dead—I suppose you *do* believe it now?—and I must wait till you could believe; this poor person must be postponed, in warm flesh and blood, to your lack-a-daisical mere memory forsooth, of a silly stripling that 's dead and rotten—nay, *pray* do stop to hear me out, and give me one more cup of your slop!—dead and rotten! Well, next your old *uncle*, on the wrong side of the law—knocks down an overseer, and then I am to keep my love—ha, ha, ha! my *love*—warm till such time as it may be in my power or my pleasure to free him, or keep him free to do more mischief. For don't think, poor child, (and his voice rose, and he betrayed an ineffable disdain, through his gloating eye, as rising he stood up, and looked even taller than usual, by bridling in truth a robust, stately figure with flushed face,) "don't *think* now—(and he wheedled ironically) that as a pastor of a numerous flock, a man somewhat looked up to, a man of some

worldly substance too—but that's but as filthy rags!—don't think that *I* am the love-sick swain to be off and on at your caprice. Yet, till the knot is tied, I cannot say 'Obey!' You are at your own disposal yet. I love you as a serious man *should* love the weaker vessel, for the sake of her help and the reproduction of his own image: in short, the begetting of children—and so forth. And d'ye know, my demure little damsel? we men know, that you slow-eyed, sleepy-eyed girls, you that never romp with us, you that carry such shamefacedness in your downcast eye, aye, though truly modest as a Magdalen, and even if as sorrowful as one—*can* love a man, let him *stoop* to make you, so as no other woman can. Be not deceived—I am not mocked—your grief, for I *know* you there too!—your grief, for a dead sweetheart though it be, heightens my—my—heightens the taste of your beauty I do assure you, pretty dove! And albeit I am a portly turtle and never coo with thee, mark if we be not as happy a couple as ever was bedded. *Only* speak the word. The ceremony and twenty-four hours after, is all that's wanting to do away all this little love-sick whimpering hindrance between us; but if you'll never come to the downright business of the thing,

why, we shall be grey first, aye dead and rotten as Billy Partridge, poor fellow!"

Within an hour after this singular specimen of spiritual courtship, Ronah, seizing the opportunity of his going out for two or three days to preach at a distant town, reached the ruin of St. Dwynwen by a glorious sunset. There her full heart and outraged delicacy found relief in a flood of tears. But her sad comfort was now become that letter—the first and last!—which she had received. The handwriting of the Dead! What a deep and dreadful pathetic there lurks in the simple characters, apart from their meaning, in such writing! But here the purport was as impressive as the characters—characters traced by a dear hand long since preyed on by the worms. She read it by the light of a sky of roses—a west where the parting sun trailed so long a glory, that the illuminated horizon embraced both sea and land in its extent.

The purple pomp of heaven looked mingled with the distant haunts of humble mountaineers, whose homes and herds were there remote, in the pastoral mountains, as well as with the more dazzling path of the seafaring man; and the watery, as much as the landward

extreme distance, melted down into one picture of calm glory and ineffable beauty.

Ronah felt strange soothing, as she by turns read, wept, and watched that picture. It seemed to her rapt melancholy, as if this poor brief scene and its precarious joys had passed away in that universal peace, and that hazy highway of celestial flowers (for such looked the clouds) was a real prolongation of this planet's floor into very heaven, where never was storm, never parting, nor dare Death enter. The gate of that place where her widowed thoughts wandered after her William eternally, seemed stilly unfolding, and inviting her, and all such drooping victims of calamity, luckless love, old age, or old age of heart, to look into its paradise, almost to mount within, to mix with its angels, to kneel in spirit at the very foot itself, of the throne of that "Lord God who shall wipe all tears from all eyes for ever!"

Part of the young missionary's letter was as follows:—

"If ever I recover—I have not long been struck—you may look for a longer letter, if you do not *see* me, for my doubts and distractions are terrible. Oh, my gentle, fond, and good girl, what business had I here? What do I *here* tossing where your hand cannot hold my

throbbing head?—why have I left you *there*, perhaps pining that you *cannot* hold it?—whole seas rolling between us? Now it's too late to ask, yet I ask myself what had I to do with converting the Heathen? Heaven knows how many poor creatures there live even in the retired parts of my own dear country, *our* country! that need instruction quite as much; how many in the populous places, whose less pardonable ignorance of morality, the best part of Christian duty, a Christian teacher might hope to *convert* to honesty, sobriety, good faith; points surely as essential to salvation, as an acquaintance with our Faith itself.——I grow dreadfully ill, and must end—yet am loth. Two partings I have endured, for the moment that land disappeared was that second parting; nay, it was like parting of my soul and body. I lost my senses, and awoke to find my poor body tossing in the midst of the sea, no longer valued by any one—in a new existence. Instead of enthusiasm I find nothing but despair. Instead of that peace and goodwill towards men, which I once found in my heart, under religion, especially when I was near you, Ronah, I now could hate all men, God forgive me! and I grow like *a bear* at a stake to which I've tied myself, for I faint in the very task I've devoted almost my life to,

before it begins. Oh, fool! fool! to spend life in encountering the fierce prides in their own dogmas, the ignorant angers, the suspicious doubts of our designs, the cruel inflictions, perhaps to starvation, stripes, and death, of I know not what remote tribes, only knowing that they need *me* not half as much as thousands of my brother-countrymen of our Welsh and Scottish highlands and islands! Oh, my dear girl, that I had known your heart in time! Oh my dear playfellow, my sister, yet sweet beyond any sister *only* a sister, I shall never see you more! This is a disease of the climate fatal almost always to strangers, and the ship will not stay long. Being alone, I feel sure that I shall die; but perhaps were you here I should think otherwise, for I feared the sea, and I feared climate, and storms, and rocks, and savages, like a very coward, the moment I lost sight of land, and have been fearing ever since. ——Worse!——If I live I shall again write, so this I need not alter, else I 'm loth to afflict you. So for ever and for ever, tenderly, dolefully, most faithfully, farewell! and hundred farewell kisses, dying kisses! could I send them, my lost, lovely Ronah!

Your own repentant,

William Partridge.

"P. S. Earnest as my innocent dear girl wa at parting, in her melancholy whim about a *soul* and a *bird*, let me here promise again —

"I PROMISE!"

"And you have *kept* that promise, my dearest!" Ronah cried passionately, clasping her hands, and stretching them up to heaven. "I am wicked to doubt! A miracle *has* been vouchsafed to your prayers for my sake at the door of heaven! Some saint *has* interceded! Yes, the blessed mother of God has been gracious to me a sinner to allow this palpable revelation! Yet still, still I *doubt!* still I want more! I want the very shape, the dear very voice, the smile—oh, the *smile!* But I *will* be content!" So saying, she held her bird to her bosom, which had now made its appearance (its miraculous visits being sometimes paid to her at home, sometimes in the ruin, or alighting from some hollow tree, distant from her residence). Her woe-weakened mind now, while reading those solemn words as they stood, the last of a dying hand,

"I PROMISE!"

and holding the very creature which fulfilled that promise, felt a full confidence which she had never done before, and opening her white

bosom——but that moment, the twilight growing dusky, she distinctly saw a shape of a young man, William's very air and features, but ghastly pale! glide silently round a corner of the ruinous wall, there stop, and fix its hollow eyes upon her, motionless as an effigy in stone, nothing stirring or sounding, but the back-ground of lonely sea behind the terrible object, weltering and breaking hollowly. Ronah's attitude was not less that of ghostlike or statue-like fixedness, for horror prevailed over love. It was indeed her spoken wish, almost her prayer of the moment before! *There* was the very smile too, but awful—yet that "very shape," that "smile," now seemed to curdle the blood in her veins, an icy shiver ran through her very heart, and even that "dear voice," that "some saint" or the "Virgin" now allowed to reach her ear—"Ronah!" had in it so much of the grave, hollow and tremulous as it was, that mere poor human passion fainted at what it doted on. But in another minute, after this mutual gaze, the words "It *is* she!" and a rush of the spectre, and an embrace, not spectral at all, and the pressure of lips, that seemed as if they had become glued to hers, and the speechless riveting of a human intense gaze, full of pity and love, upon

her altered face, and some wonder at the strange black darling of her lip and bosom, all, all broke the spell at once which death and black melancholy had entranced her in, so that before either could speak what was passing in their hearts, both were already in the restless ecstacy of suddenly being made conscious that the dear form which had so long been but an object of memory, of fancy, even to *him* not certainly *alive*—turned by absence into a sort of sweet apparition, only vivified faintly by hope—was indeed an object once more of the senses! warm, substantial, sentient, embracing and embraced!

Who shall describe their gradual recovery from this intoxication? What wild words first forced their way, what questions were asked, faster than could be answered; how she held him a little from her, to still reassure her incredulous sense that she there *did* see before her the perfect whole figure of the lost William, *did* grasp the hand (*still* warm, still answering the grasp of her's, not a worm daring to have tasted it!) which had written that sacred, that funereal letter, as it had seemed to her a minute or two before—sacred as a tomb, and deadly melancholy as its epitaph!

But other surprises awaited the mourner.

William, with a companion, had already been at the house of the Minister, and been directed to her frequent haunt, that ruin, by a boy, and now he asked permission to go and call the stranger.

The weather-beaten, sailor-looking stranger, aged but sturdy, accordingly was led in by him over the sand hillocks. Ronah gazed bewildered on his face, but her eye shrunk down under his, for it surveyed her with a strange boldness. She half fancied, a moment, it was her dear fosterfather! but his dress was respectable and his years fewer, and he seemed embarrassed a minute, as before a female stranger; but in the next, tears swum in his dark eyes, while he pored on her face, in equal wonder, and with that evident affecting thought of some kind, he grew familiar fond, at once catching her hand. "Her very face!" he said solemnly to himself, dashed off the now full-gathered tear from his eye, with a hand like tanned buckram, and instantly snatched her, startled not angry, to his broad chest, and embraced her over and over,—then held her off, looking a melancholy but loving smile at her, while he said—"And this is my child! my only child, never looked on till now! I'd swear to her among a thousand! Her poor dear mother alive again!—Nephew! you've praised her

night and day," he said afterwards, "but never praised her half as she deserves :—and this *is my* daughter! How can I ever repay poor Evan for rearing such a creature as this for me! this comfort for my old age—this—upon my soul! my dear,—how odd that sounds from my mouth again! but really I 'm ready to call you 'Madam,' and 'Lady,' and half ashamed not to do so, for all you 're all of a tremble, and like a poor bird all in a flutter. "Oh no, no!" he cried out, in earnest, abashed, when she bent one knee to kneel to him; faltering "*Another* father! A real father! *Not* dead? Then God bless you, my dear found father! Though I've never felt the want of one, thanks to my dear uncle, poor soul! poor good soul; yet to touch you, my *very* father! Oh welcome, welcome! but I 'm giddy, dear William, I 'm dark—give me your hand." Looking first at one blessed resurrection — as it was to her—then at the other, the poor girl became astounded, the more she felt re-assured of this new existence opened to her, and she reeled, and fell in total insensibility, almost ere William could catch her—into his arms.

The interest of this story, if it ever had any, is over; a rapid explanation must conclude it. William recovered from the pestilential disease; but the ship, sailing on, carried away a mistaken report of his death. Numerous ships from all parts were in the habit of watering at the place where he was seized, and here had been landed from one of those vessels—a merchantman and his own—the father of Ronah, who after almost a life of wild vicissitudes, by gradual successes in bartering trifles for valuables with the natives of the remotest regions, and obtaining accidental prize as his share from a hostile ship with Spanish dollars on board, had amassed some wealth, and proposed at last to return and spend the remainder of his days either in Ireland or Wales, accordingly as he might find his long-lost mistress or his brother surviving. From William of course he learned all circumstances, but the misfortunes of his brother. Through him, in truth, it was that the so confident assertion of his death reached the ship Fortune; for finding that William felt his honour, whatever his zeal might be, engaged in proceeding in his destination, if he should recover, and having soon gained the secret of his heart, and his consequent home-sickness that was preying on his life like a second disease,

he promptly assured him that the ship had sailed before it did, thus settling the question for him, and privily sent a premature statement of his death off to the vessel in the roads, thus preserving his character from blemish attaching to it, as that of a deserter of his post.

It need not be told that all the troubles of the "House" of the home Partridge, vanished quickly before the good fortune and the gratitude of the home-returning Partridge. The meeting of the brothers, and their discourse over the girl of two fathers, as she might be called, was of romantic interest, full of generosity and tenderness.

The shaken mind of the mother of William, seemed almost restored by the second shock of his restoration, to which she shewed her maternal feelings as quickly alive as they ever had been.

The following state of it, was that of partial childishness, compensated for by a most happy change in her former petulant temper.

The disappointed preacher found consolation, in the fullness of the ripe and rubicund charms of Mrs. Widow Bumford, one of poor Partridge's tormentors, whose person, almost the rotundity of his own, and whose feelings of kindred delicacy and her "freehold jointure well secured," rendered her a more fitting partner of

his amatory sanctity than the less gifted Ronah.

To the inventive genius of the minister was attributable the *miracle* of the raven? He had fixed a secret eye of desire on Ronah before the departure of William. Perhaps this had something to do with his strenuous advocating his going out, which otherwise was rather unaccountable, seeing he was to go under auspices not of the Methodist but Church Missionary Society. He had overheard the lovers in the dusky wood by twilight, when taking leave, and Ronah's simple request about the reappearance, and the raven form. Afterwards, when he found that she was clinging to a hope of her lover's being yet alive, the wily man happening on one of his preaching journeys, to meet a lad with a raven very tame, which he had taught curious habits of familiarity and fondling, he bethought him how easy it would be to dispatch to the poor girl the sable ambassador from another world, which she secretly expected in this bird, after which assurance of her William's death, he little doubted her released fancy and wishes would settle on himself; for Mr. Ralph Bull conceived little beyond externals in woman's nature. Accustoming this creature to the ruin, and occasion-

ally to the house, he could put it secretly in her way, at pleasure; he even, to convince the credulous Catholic girl, stealthily unlocked the rude wooden lock of her door, in night, to introduce it, on the occasion already mentioned of its first day's visit. Though this explanation was long after afforded, the visitation of the raven remained unaccounted for to the lovers, and the now pleasant mystery remained to amuse them.

The two old brothers having now to recommence life, and John tired of the sea, though parting on very good terms with it, as usual with those whom it has enriched, they took a small grass and sheep farm, within sight, though not within the roar of it, on the other side of the Menai strait, in Carnarvonshire, a little way up one of those lovely yet majestic valleys, walled in by stupendous heights, yet rich and smiling as a garden below, to which the rivers, coming down direct into the sea, almost always introduce the upward traveller.

They were led to this place through William's being settled in a curacy there, to which his uncle, (frank and generous, and glad to have found as an idle old bachelor, so much *business* on his hands, joined to the new father's feeling) had procured for him also the next presenta-

tion, on the death of the incumbent, already a bedridden paralytic. But ere this period, a delightful interval had introduced William in the new and pleasanter character of a *Home* Missionary, in *converting* the pretty Catholic to a less bigotted creed, in which, through a course of liberal general not theological reading, joined, no doubt, to the mighty influence of love and deference for the sentiments of the beloved, he made such progress, that though in due time blessed with her hand, the young priest did not marry a Roman Catholic after all.

It is unpleasant to have to add, that dissensions, (the common lot) arose in this once happy family. The very small farmhouse of the brothers (William residing in another house) was the prettiest in the whole dale, but John would have it named the Marine Villa, though the sea was five miles off, and Evan wanted to call it the "Green Farm," which was fit enough, it being quite "land-locked," as the marine brother said, within a sort of sylvan cove, a semi-lunar cavity of huge rock strata piled very high, whence gigantic trees, and their roots like trees themselves, — or "man-of-war cables," as he compared them to, overhung and shot up, and leaned and writhed from the very top, where just peeped the round edge of some pleasant

grassy ground above, high in the blue,—down to near the house roof, and peatstack, and a slip of ground, that formed a good orchard, enjoying the south and the sun great part of the day. Luckily Ronah was appealed to, who hinted at the name of "Heart's Ease Cottage," which though a bit fantastic was expressive, and pleased both, and so set the matter at rest.

"Indeed, you're a cle—cle—clever wench, Ronah. Ha, ha, ha, heart's ea—ea—heart's ease!" said Evan, stroking her cheek, "beau—bu—beautiful name, is'nt it, Jack?" It hardly need be mentioned, after this, that our honest old fosterfather (who suffered no loss of love from her finding a second father, "not a jot!") had by this time recovered his own easy mind, such as God gave him, for his impediment was come again as bad as ever.

Whoever passed up that noble dale in a summer day, might see the daily doings at once of this Marine Villa, *alias*, &c. At the back of Evan's small barn, (for he took all the farming department) which formed one side of a sort of rude forecourt, with antique yew and box all about, was piled a strange huge heap of sea shells, including oysters and cockles,—of bits of ore and blocks of spar, the bringing which so far had almost enriched the poor of

the valley, which John called his cavern, and to which he *would* add two rusty anchors, while two huge ribs of whale, or some such bone, formed a grotesque Gothic arch over a hatch door, opening with a latch and string, and vegetating eaves of thatch.

Old Mrs. Partridge busied herself all day long among this shining heap. The retired "gentleman sailor" was to be espied near the very top of that fractured precipice, beetling over the house, smoking his pipe on one of the lofty cable roots jutting there, or a horizontal trunk of a tree, with his telescope always ready, (his staple resource of amusement) still reconnoitring his old element, and watching how it fared with those he had left there—while for himself he could have said with full sincerity

Inveni portam, Spes et Fortuna valete, &c. &c.

At the same time, the landsman brother was to be seen, in spite of some rheumatism, and heard, (his stammer notwithstanding) hallooing, cheering or scolding his sheep dog, up the mountain sheep walk, after some score or two of sheep, or else tossing his hay, in the very broil of the noon-day sun, as if his subsistence depended on his plaything of a sheepcote or his sugar-loaf rick of hay.

It was on a Sunday morning, some time after this migration from the other side of the water, that a young man with a bundle on a stick slung over his shoulder, came from England-way up that valley, whistling a tune of *Saxon* city vulgarity, and often setting down his load, to try his dexterity in stoning the little birds that hopped in the road, secure in its wildness and constant stillness. He was evidently what in common talk, is called "a loose one"—young—yet careless of his appearance, dirty—yet his clothes of almost fashionable cut.

Enquiring for the house of the minister (not the Rev. Ralph Bull's, but Rev. William Partridge's) he was shown the Curate's house—between a romantic steep garden, and a steeper orchard already hung with ruddy fruit; the lonely little river winding and shining before with contorted course, among old roots and undermined flowering lumps of grassy ground, a vast bank of mountain variety—smooth turf, crag, tumbling torrent and patches of forest shade, full in front; and up and down the dale, the greenest fields, freshened by the irrigation of small branch rivulets, while higher up behind the ivy-grown yellow-stoned house, and all its rustic offices, including an

underground dairy (the *delicies deliciarum*, next to an orchard!) whose door opened under a green mound like some hermitage cell—above these rose sloping William's (future) own glebe land, the newly yellowed grain-pieces looking like little enclosures of perpetual sunshine, interspersed with rampant foliage, and sunshiny greensward, black umbrage of woods more lofty still, and pale naked cliffs, overpeering all, many feathered with ivy, darker even than the wood, looking the fine ruin of decayed castles, and crumbling battlements.

As the young Sunday idler approached this pleasantest of homes—a bell was tolling to prayer, from an antique church tower very near, in truth sounding much like a sheep bell, and that cracked.

The country people were but just gone in, so he entered, and saw a somewhat pale but healthful young clergyman, of dark complexion, and eyes peculiarly soft, and a countenance pensively lit up with mind, but looking the luxury of heart's ease to fullness, notwithstanding that thoughtful cast.

But that look and those eyes, were turned that moment down on an object that seemed to have imparted much of that softness, and elicited that exquisitely sensitive expression:—

for in the pew just facing his desk, was now kneeling a young woman, whose features—paller than beseemed her otherwise healthful, happy look, and eyes slightly sunken, hinted of that peculiar new aspect, of mixed languor, and nervous increase of sensibility, which at certain eras of wedded life, alters the female face, mostly to the effect of delicately beautifying it. As she was placed, she could not lift her eyes to Heaven without their travelling past the face of her husband, and as they could not resist just speaking a word in passing (for they *spoke*), he had to answer for dividing with that Heaven her every look, if not her thoughts.

Whoever had seen our Ronah in her past hours, with her "white uplifted eyes" watching some dark bird "sail upon the bosom of the air," could not fail to recognise in our young wife the "Minister's lady," while thus upturning those modest eyes, (not without a pardonable touch of softer than devotional feeling in them, as they rested *en passant*, heavenward bound) that gentle expectant of a ghostly revelation.

As the minister retired home, after service, with his sweet companion hanging on him, and

the two old brothers, and the old dame, happier if weaker in intellect than before, they were accosted by one of the returned brothers of William, (the young man lately described) a sort of Prodigal Son in humble life, but alas! not the Reclaimed. A sort of shy ill-will marked his envy of the elegantly decorous appearance of the youthful pastor, more sternly marked still toward the affectionate girl, whose heart yearned towards him—her, whom he had always regarded as a mere hanger-on of his father's charity. A mortified dejection, the first step to repentance, also was evident, as he walked unshaven and squalid, with his mean bundle, by his sleek brother's side, nor did he refrain from that worst hankering of the self-made destitute, to involve their friends in some share of the discredit at least, quickly informing all he spoke with, that the Curate and future Rector was his brother.

The "missionary" had the happiness of experiencing how much good might be done *at home*, in the complete conversion to a sober and modest breeder of sheep and grazier of the hills, of this young man, to which the generous fond attentions of his sister-in-law, who could not resent injuries, doubtless contributed.

It could be but a brief time that William waited for his preferment, for in a corner of the Caernarvon Journal was not long after to be read:

BIRTHS.

Last Monday, of a daughter, the wife of the Rev. W. Partridge, *Rector* of ——— Caernarvonshire.

To which I beg to add, that the last feminine *bulletin* of the Valley, was "as well as can be expected!"

OUR COUNTRY!

"He sighed for his country, by twilight repairing,
To wander alone by the windbeaten hill."

M. DE HUMBOLDT having ascended a vast mountain, the Silla of Caraccas, resembling in its desolate grandeur the passes of Saint Gothard and Great St. Bernard, stopped to roll his "poet's eye" round the vast solitudes, the loneness and wildness of (seemingly) undisturbed nature. Mists came down from the awful heights on the wild wind, and drove him for shelter into a little sort of inn or resting-place near the summit, where, huddled together above the habitable world as it were, he found a knot of human beings in angry dispute about

politics!—patriots of Caraccas wrangling about a revolution in favour of "*independence*" that they had just "got up there." Its first feat had been to take the life of Joseph España; its second, to clap up his widow for life in a prison, *(alias* convent,) as a just and manly punishment for having sheltered him, her *husband!* when an outcast; for not denouncing her *husband* to the new "Liberal" government! for not having acted the part of the bloody machine, the 'Maiden,' to her *husband!* for not having given the signal when he stole to her bosom, for the Liberal blood-hunters to stab him to the heart—vile, unpatriotic woman!

Well does that traveller observe, that men carry their civil broils and their base and odious passions into the very bosom of nature, to mountains and wildernesses, and almost above the line of perpetual snow!

"And what then, discursive Quaker? what now?" you exclaim.

"Why this, friend; dost *thou* think to leave politics behind at no greater height than the *Welsh* mountains? Why, otherwise, that stare at the words, 'our country,' at that omen of a visitation of politics here?

"Because they have no business here; because I hate them; because we've too much of *them* in cities; because—"

"*Business!* mine esteemed friend! you might as well go to sea in an open boat now, and cry you want to have done with waves and winds, as say you 'll *live* now out of the stormy atmosphere of politics. So do I hate them. I verily believe our politico-maniacal friend, yclep'd the 'Rural Doctor,' hates 'em too. But what 's to be done? Certain I am, that ere thou 'rt half through these volumes, thou 'lt have been over head and ears in them, many a time in thy club-house, or coffee-house, or own house, or M. P. second-floor lodging, or all those. Why then not take that more piquant meal (or dram of liqueur) on *our* green table, as well as quit us? Let us, since the thing *will* fly in our face like the sea-spray in the teeth of that voyager, 'take it easy,' and *play* with the plaguy insolent that spits at us, and that howls round us everywhere.

The poet-minded traveller I have just dragged in, tells us, that it is in the *hurricane* months that the phosphorescent *insects* abound most, and form an "imposing" spectacle; the myriad blood-red little fires which kept whirling about his way, (the river Manzanares, fringed by cocoa-nut trees,) confounded with the sparks of the deep-blue vault reflected in its dusky glass, appeared so many dancing, rushing,

bloody-beamed, real stars of heaven! The trees also all glistened with them, every leaf scintillating with these mysterious sparks. But, all their glory and their mystery vanished with the return of *light*. When the *dark* departed and the *serene* season returned, there was only a quiet stream, and rows of sober-leafed trees and these brilliant vermin shewed only as dust upon them!

"*There 's* food for thought: but feed, thou; I shall not feed thee. You 're old enough, yourself. This is England's hurricane-season and dark hour. Next, mark the vast advantage you will have in my acting toward you the part of a cool medium to breathe through, as *I* but transmit the fiery element of politics, breathed by that little Esculapian dragon. Don't turn on me and say I only act as the cold acts in condensing the passing steam, if thou art a wit, I pray thee! For, *nota bene*:—there breathes not a more placid creature than my proper (drab) self. If *once* I have, in touching on Harlech, *seemed* to vent *original* political bias, believe me it was not vent—but ventriloquism. I but transmitted *verbatim* an outbreak of our Doctor's zeal; and understand the same ever, henceforth. *I* am all over cucumber. *I* can cool your hottest disputant 'like a dish of tea!'"

"Here, then, is sympathy between thee, Reader, and me. If thou art an *Ultra*-Radical, I am indeed silent, put up my lip, and pout, pout! But art thou a Whig of the old school? Why, so am I, if *anything*. Who can fail to admire heartfelt zeal for the *real* rights of man? No one.

"Art thou a foe to *all Ultras?* So am I; but an *Ultra*-Constitutionalist is to me, I own, like an ultra-fond mother or father. I can't confound such with an ultra-barbarous one. I may smile, but cannot frown; I would rather laugh than loathe.

"Art thou a 'Reformer,' as the word is? Why should thou and I quarrel? If sincere, as *I* am, we both aim at one end, good government. As to the means, 'tis most likely that not I, nor you, can wield so much as our little finger's might in the cause. Mere lookers-on, then, let us hear our mountain-man disquiet himself 'with a vain shadow,' (*vain* to us imbeciles,) without dropping our neutrality; we sitting cool the while, as on a green shady knoll on this neutral ground, as reader and reporter.

"Nay, even if thou should'st be incorrigibly Radical, hang it! must I lose a reader? Read on, by all means! Read the ravings of *my* mountaineer-sage, and in return, I promise to read those of *your* citizen-sage, Robespierre,

addressed to, or referring to those superfluous thousands of human cabbages, or 'forked radishes,' which that first, at least patriarchal Utilitarian found it 'just and necessary' to pluck out from the over-stocked garden-bed of society; a God- (not self-) appointed gardener and pruner of that sensitive plant and production of dirt, *genus* man.

"Heaven forbid that I should imply that *our* Utilitarians are prepared to follow *out-and-out* the principles of that philanthropist of the guillotine! but truth commands me to remember that this great Benthamite principle, this sublime discovery, (new as gunpowder, fine as Perkins's steam-gun,) is neither more nor less than that identical glorious "blatant" great beast that roared so in Paris, *here* lapped in lamb's wool, (not yet dyed red) the very national "great public principle," that a "great nation" is a fine thing indeed, but every individual of it a worthless worm! one coral insect to the mountain-isle which myriads are to form in the ocean! one soldier's carcase in a trench which is to be *bridged* across by human bodies!—that only human "masses" are worth a Utilitarian's sublime study! human beings not worth—what you will! a farthing, or half that, if you will split it in two!"

EVENING.

Vale of Llanwrtyd, on the river Irvon, Brecknockshire.

A BEAUTIFUL situation is so rare a concomitant, I think, of the medicinal wells, that where it does occur, we enjoy it for its novelty. The finest *I* chance to have seen is Matlock Bath. This of Llanwrtyd, in a rocky vale as romantic as that, with a river more grotesque than the Derwent there, at least vies with that more fashionable resort of invalids.

We had suspended our tour during some days, and rejoined our conducteur by appointment in this place. The wildest brown mountains form the vestibule to the deep repose of this green and sylvan temple of Hygeia, and the tract to be crossed being but short, if the approach be made by the village of Llangammarch, the circumstance heightens the effect of the sudden bursting on the eye, (growing weary of treeless sheep-walks all in russet,) of a deep dale, running up into the very heart of grand mountains, many, and wild of summit, and richly pastoral below. The bowered river serpentines along this truly sylvan dale, smoking

cottages (true Welsh ones, such as landscape painters love,) dot the bright green borders of it with their old grey stone, their thatches and thatch-*crops*, flowery and deep of grass, and beautify even the placid blue of the summer atmosphere above, by the added placidity and beautiful motion of those lonely smoke-wreaths, lingering over the free wild groves, of oaks, ashes, and hazel clumps, that partly hide each happy hut, whose very look makes poverty beautiful to imagination. Nor is here squalid or mourning poverty known. Good peatstacks, big as the house, lean against almost every house-end. The singing of *adult* persons is frequent in the total stillness of a midsummer day, broken only by the distant axe of some woodman up some wild forest-clothed outlet, opening by a chasm in the mighty wall of mountain, a bleat from its blue-arched top, and that simple song of some "knitter in the sun."

At the beginning of this delicious river-dale stands a goodly mansion, divided by only a gravel walk from the translucent stream, green tinted by profuse foliage all about, as well as the closeness of the green mountains embosoming it. This mansion is Dol Coed, on the

ground of which the medicinal water rises, bubbling out over a beautiful greensward, but now built over with convenient baths and rooms for visitors.

In a sweet evening it was idle to look for our Doctor in-doors; so the Major and I (the Parson halting on before us) advanced up the dale, past a little church at its other end, a black mountain-cone of all firs, that formed a solemn back-ground to the church-yard, and a rustic bridge beside it, and having thus entered another widening ravine, stopped and listened. We heard a roar, a waterfall, or something akin to it, and no longer were at a loss for a guide to our strolling amateur-gipsy. Sure enough we soon found him luxuriating on a grassy couch, reclined, Roman fashion, at his meal (tea), in a lovely little nook facing the west, between the hills, where the fine river has a fall just great enough to be white and wild of look, solemn and yet soothing of sound. It is about half a mile from the church; our road wound *through* the little wild farms' foldyards, as they call them, or "folds," almost under the old thick eaves and their trail weeds, among cows that women were milking; thrushes sung, the river sung by our side, one or two of the milk-maids sung, till shyness silenced them as

we passed; and last, not least, sung merrily our Doctor's tea-kettle, on a stove of three stones from the rugged channel brink.

While we chatted with our host in his little cove of a true shepherd's river, we were startled by another song yet, (truly wild indeed,) that came we knew not whence; till out of some deep grass, (still dry from having basked long in the afternoon sun,) a diminutive face, with singular gravity, peered above the buttercups and dandelion flowers, chains of the stalks of which encircled a small neck next appearing, and in the face we could pretty surely recognize one we had seen in more *phases* than *one* often exhibits—benevolent, malignant; corrugated—as if by eating a crab—by splenetic wretchedness, relaxed into complacency; lighted up, black as a night-storm; in short, our story-teller's own visage in miniature, the man of many moods, "everything by turns and nothing long."

"Why, how now, neighbour?" I exclaimed, (not that I had not known before,) "I thought your tent and your boys was 'your world,' at least you told us so?"

"Oh, friend, I did not tell you they made my only world; you don't think me so bad a Christian as to be wickedly content with one world, do you?" replied he, and anon another

girl, older than her sister the grasshopper, came running in high glee till abashed by us strangers. "They are in full enjoyment of a novelty," he added, "the first time of sharing our rude picnic. This girl, Caroline, is mad to be a true gipsy and share our tent for a night, but such doings are not for the delicate. *Dol Coed* receives us all to-night."

"You 're not a Malthusian it seems, then, Doctor?" said the Major, "no anti-population man?"

"No, sir; we hear of 'patronising Providence.' That 's vastly kind of this clay-god man; but to school her is a richer joke yet. I fear the 'Schoolmaster,' however, takes her in hand too late, and as the bad trick has been caught it will never be broke; that huge error in the multiplication table never be corrected. This sad unequal race in growing, between those two kinds of grasses, that which "all flesh is," and that which all grain is, I fear will never be made right, *if it's wrong*. Strange, that worms are better provided for than men! Slow, alas! the ratio of increase, while this same grass is growing to be cut down for *man's* use; but no sooner is it grown, cut, eaten, and become very man, than, whee! it's pushing forth shoots, thick as a potatoe in spring, now when it 's only to be

'cut down' for the grave-worms! Still, I so little admire Miss Martineau's lore, that I love to put forth new editions of a work, which (as you see) will soon be out of print, for no other reason than to confront *her* little editions. You see two little practical repartees, that 's all, to *her* witticisms. Hymen forbid that she should ever supply such herself to herself!"

We talked of watering places. "Aberystwith has a sort of wild grandeur," he remarked. "A castle ruin, an old grey street, and a sublime long long wavy line of coast with headlands of craggy height, each beautiful with its own distant snowy *cataract* of leaping ocean-foam as it breasts and breaks the green sea, ridged with its many silver-edged furrows of calm waves in ranks. What a contrast is *Aberystwith* to *Brighton*, whose dead downs charm the taste of Fashion!"

I inquired about Llandrindod Wells, never having been there, and heard much of them, at least, in Wales.

"Yes," he answered, "one might apply to it Shakespeare's words, a little adapted.—'The water itself is a good water; but, as for the drinker of it, he may carry away more diseases than he brings there.' The water has its virtue, no doubt; and so as that hardly-procured and

rare remedy, *aqua pura,* impregnated with that equally rare salt called Epsom's. But of all such wonder-working wells I suspect the important *&c.* of the water-drinking, like a lady's *P.S.* to her letter, is the chief matter. Did you ever hear of our Welsh 'charming'—a cure for lame horses, men, &c.?"

I never had.

"Why," said he, "it is done thus:—First 'name the creature,' says the sage who 'charms' it—then mumbles words, then writes words, then gives the sybilline leaf to the owner, and strokes the part; and, *now,* there wants nothing to the certain cure but———what? a little *time!* But the 'et cetera' is more lengthy in the other case, the previous process shorter. Drink the water!—then don't get drunk—don't even booze;—then eat simply, rest early, rise early, walk down your fat, with a few more obediences, and taking also *time*—the *water* will cure you (if not cursed with a pigheaded constitution, that the more you drive it from the grave will turn towards it)."

An old German doctor (Linden) has written 60 or more years ago a lie to delude visitors to Llandrindod, which, perhaps, passes current even now, having been preserved for modern use. He calls the exposed, lofty, moorish

common of Llandrindod, with its bitter bleak blasts, a Montpelier! He wrote panegyrics on all kinds of medicinal springs here and abroad, and seems quite Catholic in his own faith in all, without exception. He even calls one Grosvenor who built quite a 'hell there, (for he introduced gambling, racing, French milliners, heaven knows not what—'hell opened the wild'!)—a benefactor of mankind! The more sensible gentry pulled down, and drove out all as a nuisance. The roads to Llandrindod are now good from all parts (though some Welsh guide books, copying old ones, still represent otherwise); but, when *there*, the traveller looks all round over as boggy, brown, broken-up, melancholy, naked a 'blasted heath,' as ever combined the aguish poverty of the tamest English common that starves its dingy sheep, with the worst traits of a Welsh wild moor. Yet, wildness there is none, unless in stony sterility. No mountain wildness, no grandeur, no pastoral. The very gorse bushes and ragged turf, left unbroken, are reliefs to the eye, though none to the body, when caught in one of the storms of this balmy Montpelier.

The accommodations for visitors are, I believe, much improved of late, but nothing can compensate for the mournfulness of the locality.

I have seen gay parties cowering under outspread cloaks overhead, driving for shelter, *home,* which not a tree, except close to the Pump-house, rises to afford, and thought the sight truly grotesque, of these *invalids* thus drenched, draggled, wading a spongy heath,—howling winds in their ears,—sleet or rain in their faces,—mists, like night's shades, rolling them up half hidden from my view,—all 'Invalids in search of Health!' An interesting 'Diary' they might write, like Poor Mathews, no doubt, of their days at Llandrindod! Then, to reflect that all this is to be counterbalanced by a few grains' weight (in each draught of pure water) of two or three saline and other substances, which identical elements may be bought at every chemist's shop for a penny. Faith is as omnipotent in maladies of Body as those of Soul. I suspect that the best of these wonder-working waters, is the large one called Ocean.

The younger children being gone toward their night's resting-place, the father (looking after them going, as our Joe, the biggest lad, bore little Hester, with all her flowers, chains, and field finery about her, on his back,) said, checking a deep sigh, "We joke about our progeny; but how often a heartache beneath

keeps twinging us while we laugh, as infants smile with their features while tormented with inward pain!—the pain the very cause of their smiling! Would to God I had 'led these *graces* to the grave, and left the world no copy!' You'll say that would have been very cruel to 'the world,' while you look at me and all my graces!"

"What!" I said, "would you forego all the joys of parentage?"

"Ah! Sir," he rejoined, "we wish, and we repent our wish! A boy sees the owner of a little flock of spring lambs basking on a bank, a whole sunshiny bank of mountain, they skipping round him white as snow,—the tender tint of the sod,—the purpling of the simple blooms,—the tender hue of the soft blue sky, —the tender spectacle of the little creatures suckled by their dams,—all transport the poor lad. That poor shepherd seems a sort of god in his happy high place; and, if he but play on a green wheat-stalk, its very squeak, its shrill treble, is music in that blue serene and stillness. Oh! how he longs to be a shepherd! He comes again in December:—wind-beaten, weary, withered of look and dress, under a leaden-hued sky, all snow, is *that* comfortless poor man, striking his benumbed feet against

the sheeted ice of the whole field, to kindle some feeling in them — are those dingy sheep, that look all earth-colour against the snow drifts they are half lost in,—are *those* that shepherd and that flock? God help him! he can't even keep 'em down by his side in the valley for danger of the *night's* deep snow; but must drive them up, drive 'em *out*, as if *not* his own, to the windbeaten hill where the snow can't lie, though the wildest and most exposed place of all! And is not that man's task, in so driving his own little flock away from his snug fold in the valley, like that sad duty of a father, *not affluent*, in forcing his own young comforters out into the ever-vexed 'world' (as it's called) just when his heart most cries out for them to stay by him?

"'Oh! happy he that's a father!' cries a bachelor, (like that boy in lambing-time, and the delicious new-come summer) one yet in life's May. 'Oh, that I had,' he sighs incessantly to himself, 'such a charming solace in this uphill of life as one of those little spring lambs of the human flock! White souls of God without a stain! How delicious were it to hold you by the little hand,—to look in your artless face, and think, here 's the hand that never did offence, the eye that never looked it!

the kiss that is itself an oath of its truth, of heaven's own prompting! here 's the heart that never throbbed less kindly, the mind that never thought less innocently, than the angels of heaven! Oh! the music, the melting ravishing music of that voice, whether singing in deep grass, or but lisping in sleep, of which we can proudly say 'that's the voice of *mine own!*' Oh! the thrill such hands send up to our cherished hearts, when thrust into ours for a walk or a nap on the knee! Ah! I am nothing till I am a father! Ah! we are but yet among the stones of the briny dead beach of the sea of eternity, not up the land of life; have not reached one greensward, one herb, one flower, one rill of water, till we see, we hear, one of these little babblers welling out of the arid desert! Soon let *me* reach one, soon let me begin that fresh existence—a father's! Soon grant me that new life of life, dear God!'

"Ah, fool! the time will come when he will pant *beneath* what he now pants *for*. He will grieve that ever God granted that prayer, when finding his own unfitness for this *war* Existence, he faints, faints — when he learns that the struggle is not to be for the *sweets*, the 'nice felicities' of life, but for life, for life!

"Perhaps that intense wish itself ought to

have forewarned the wretch of that unfitness. Such amiable extravagance is for the feebler heart and nerves of woman, not the doomed Conscript, man. To *him* it will be torture to drive his flock out and up into that 'place of storms,' the World. He would be for making every one a pet lamb, a bosom lamb,—pretty subjects to meet the world's cold, and misfortune's night of snowing!

"Oh! young man! whoever you are," our eccentric declaimer concluded, "who are indulging such wishes as those, be warned by one who *has* indulged them to his sorrow. You are a poet, (the insane degree of your desire proves it); a poet in the curse of that character:—the temperament—the hope—the *good* of it is no more. The *thorns* of the crown (of thorns) of Genius are *now* alone your lot. Know then that God has, by that fatal gift, doomed that lot to be lonely, lonely, lonely! Weep in secret,—sigh to the brooks,—talk to the moon in its pool mirrors; but shun the white face of beauty,—turn from the little features of rosy infancy. Keep your curse *your's* only, or you will buy short joy with fierce pains and long despair. Do not entail that curse on those you will love, 'not wisely, but too well,' lest the curses of even those pursue you in the grave!"

Our mountain-doctor has that weakness, which I fear will rapidly spread among us, if this *Ultra*-Reform spirit continue; the making politics a sort of quite personal matter, and waxing passionate about state affairs. Secretly, I could not help thinking that a man shut up among mountains for many years, an obscure cypher in every "world" but that of "dreams," must be indifferently qualified to judge measures or public men; moreover, that, being rather a liege subject of the heart, of the "bosom's lord," than duly obedient to the mind's—the higher throne—that of judgment, his *dictum* on love or poetry, on woods and waterfalls, was more to be trusted than that on more worldly topics. In short, I began to feel his outbreaks on politics, many of which we endure, a *bore*, because I wholly distrusted his capacity to decide.

Just as I was thinking thus, (the "poet-father" having been long silent) he broke out with a remark on the "plague and curse" of political fury pervading *all* ranks, and hurrying

the most remote and unfitted persons into the arena of dispute!

Hence I fear I betrayed my thoughts by a smile, at this mal-a-propos reflection of the Doctor, which I was that moment making myself with application to *him*. Hereupon he launched forth into a tirade, on the justice of which decide thou, friend—I decide not.

"Your look says that *I* myself am an instance of that political mania I reprobate. To be sure I am! *That's* the very ground of my complaint. I say that democracy, the pretence of it, the whole people's pretending to govern *themselves*, through a merely nominal ministry and nominal monarchy, which seems the present *rage*, tends to force every individual into that arena either offensively or defensively. For is it *not* a really personal question, and a most awful one, whether I and mine shall live under a *valid* Constitution, or none?—walk erect as freemen, beneath the blessing of a limited monarchy, as under the wing of a guardian angel; or crouch as slaves to the caprices of a wild mobocracy, thundering its absolute will—mad, foolish, or wicked—through the juggling oracles of a *mock* constitution? I say 'give me my hollow tree and liberty,' my

woods and waterfalls, and my children; and let who will wrangle over politics. 'King, Lords, and Commons,' form my palladium. To *their* well-balanced power I bow, and rejoice to leave the futurities of these little ones. To their august, benign, and paternal wisdoms, approved through ages on ages of perfect freedom—through the proudest and longest career of glory and peace, and prosperity, and liberty, ever enjoyed by a nation on the face of the earth, gladly I bequeath these my dear children, as to *perpetual* Fathers! Alas! thus might I have said *once*!—can I now? While faithful watchmen were on the tower, why should a humble broken-spirited man like me climb to face the bleak wind, and walk the lofty platform, and turn sentinel myself, to feebly cry the alarm? Not I! But what if that tower (the old tower of our glorious constitution) be assaulted, sapped, beleaguered, ready to be blown up from without through trains laid by traitors within—to be battered down by open attack—the guard well nigh overpowered—their voices coerced—all distrust—a daring cabal openly discussing the 'utility' of rasing the outworks (nay, the very foundations!) level with the ground? Who can repose in his be-

loved quiet, love it as he may, in *such* a conjuncture? It is the God-demented wretches, who thus invoke perdition on their own heads, that *compel*—not his own whim or folly, that *invite*—such peaceable man to be up and stirring 'with the time,' as the execrable cant is—that is to say, the time of Babel-jargon, Bedlam vanity, blood-reckless revolt against all venerable authority. Not the follies, not the time-stains of antiquity, but *Antiquity* is the mark of these Destructives. The idiots confound the venerable edifice itself with the parasitical plants and mosses in which time inevitably disguises its imperishable stone, and condemn the whole as a mere ruin, full of foolish owls, a mockery, a shell! The ingrates forget the protection which the triple-trunked tree of the Constitution has afforded for ages to the happy sons of the British soil, and are laying the axe to the root—why? Because the fibres of ivy have grown into the trunk itself, and cannot *easily* be severed, and they are unsightly, and they do restrict a little the circulation of the green blood of the noble antiquity of the forest; the sap does *not* mount quite so buoyantly as in a feeble sapling, to be snapt by the first blast! and *therefore*, down to the ground with

it! What else, at least what less mad, less impudent, less insolent, is this (permitted! *proh pudor!*) treasonable open debating about abolishing one main pillar of our tower, one main trunk of our British tree, (whichever of those images may liveliest represent our ancient, upright, protective branch of the English government,) the House of Lords? Whether by technicality of our laws it be treason or no, I maintain that every man who dares to propose such abolition is a virtual traitor. That it involves abolition of the throne also, I deem the least part of his crime—I hold him a traitor to his country, and worse than that, a traitor to his duty—a traitor to natural affection, a bloody-minded *step*-parent to his own offspring—a rebel to the voice of God in his heart, and of reason in his mind, which cannot but whisper him, that in robbing his children of their birthright—the *unimpaired* Constitution which *he* himself received *valid* and omnipotent from *his* fathers—he is transgressing the first rule of not only Christian but even Heathen morality: 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.'"

"Order, order! chair, chair!" the Major called to us, laughing, from where he was trying the fly on the further side of a little pool,

for even so far he could see the agitated gestures of our mountain orator, whom, by the bye, we have constituted *arbiter elegantiarum*, master of the ceremonies, say at once "Speaker" (far from a silent one) of our ambulatory parliament. Therefore the "Speaker," instantly recollecting his rank and station, as thus appealed to, dropped his tones and said with the gracious suavity of a former Speaker of "another place" (let us be parliamentary in our speech), "The honoured member will perhaps lower his tones and his eyebrows, and dilate his eyes somewhat less, without occasion for my interference."

"I bow to the authority of the Chair," replied the humbled member, to his own voice, rising from sitting asquat on the mossy knoll of an old beech-tree's root, and bowing reverently to the indentation of his own nether man, on the flattened plumes of young fern, that formed the cushion of that Virgilian sort of chair, worthy of a Tityrus. "I trust, Sir, a little warmth may meet excuse in *such* a cause."

Thus checked in mid career, our rural politician resumed his seat at the tree's foot, musing—

> "he slunk into his mew,
> And straight did recollect his 'poetry' anew,"

for he seemed muttering poetry.

"I beg pardon," said our Major, who was trying a throw of the fly before dark, as he gave up his sport, "but pray, Doctor, what may be your age? But *don't* tell, by any manner of means, if you would rather not!"

"My age, my age?" said the absent man, half roused from reverie—"September!—nay, by the mass, October!"

"How so? How September?" asked the Major laughing.

The Doctor answered him by reciting, I presume—for he does not profess himself an improvisatore—the stanzas following:

AUTUMN,—AND LIFE'S AUTUMN.

SEPTEMBER woods, September skies, so soft and sunny all!
Unfaded and unfall'n your leaves, and yet so soon to fall:
Ah, what avails that dying smile which gilds your fading green?
White Winter peeps, like Death, behind, to shut the farewell scene!

Stretch'd beautiful the landscape lies, a mockery of May,
Like some fair corpse, yet beautiful, laid out but for decay:
Howl, ye wild winds! beat, wintry rains! heaven's groans and tears! more meet
Than such a smile o'er Summer dead,—so green a winding-sheet!

Less sad the wild woods yellowing, their empty arms less sad,
When all their leaves as torn-off hair they strew, like mourners mad,

On all the winds, and naked stand, the mountain's skeletons,
High beating o'er the waterfalls that thunder back their groans.

September skies, September woods! how like life's soft decline,
When round a heart too old to hope, its farewell beauties shine!
When every pangless minute steals a mournful preciousness!
Till e'en life's blessings turn to pain, so soon no more to bless!

With health's mock Spring in every limb, its glow, its easy breath,
More horror flings round thy black frost, thy Springless winter, Death!
Though, like this winter in disguise, Death steals on with a smile,
It comes, it comes,—eclipsing all this bloomy world the while.

As one borne down a pleasant stream tow'rd a terrific fall,
In its blue depths and cowslip banks no pleasantness at all
Finds, for the failing of his heart, in horror of th' abyss—
So sad, though smooth, life's latter stream,—for, lo! the precipice!

Though like your sapless leaves still green, still hangs th' unaltered hair,
Time, that delays its snow, will soon the very skull lay bare.
Oh, Autumn woods, and fields, and flowers! to you Spring comes again,
To clothe, to paint, to beautify; to Man the mourner, *when?*

The blossom shall remount its bough, each little flower its bank;
Each, blushing to the Spring-god's smile, resume its being's rank;

Th' immortal violet burst the sod; while man, proud man, whose foot
Treads its pale beauty down, shall lie in darkness 'neath its root!

Though Faith point to a prouder home for man's ejected soul,
His mortal part what creed forbids a backward eye to roll?
A valley-shepherd called to change his cottage for a throne,
Might sigh to leave his fields, his fold, and all his little own:

So I, while men more worthy, more ambitious of Heaven's crown,
O'erlook Death's gulf, *I* shivering stand, and still look back or down:
Not golden groves of angels tempt my wishes from these vales;
Enough of Paradise for me, "mine own romantic"* Wales.

"Ah, Sirs," said the Reverend Ezekiel, as the speaker concluded, "it hath a sorry look with it, when a man's heart is so set on this world! It looks as if he did not expect another."

"And may not poor human nature be forgiven for clinging to a world so beautiful as this?—that is to say, were it always fine weather, and were no such thing as man walking it."

"Oh fie!" cried the Major laughing, detecting in a passing cloud that hid the sun, the cause of this Timon-like finale to our rustic sage's remark.

"Oh! Sir," rejoined Ezekiel, "how can there

* "Mine own romantic town!"—WALTER SCOTT.

be *bad* weather, when it's God who sends all weathers? I rarely even notice or know *what* weather it is, for my part," and he sighed deeply, rolling up his eyes devoutly. "Cats and dogs, as the saying is, are fine weather—a fine rain—are blessings from the clouds to a happy state of spirit! a regenerated state of mind!"

"Nay, nay," said the Major—"kittens and puppies, I grant you, when one's fishing—I don't mind it's raining them, but 'cats and dogs,' hang it!"

Turning from the priest, Major R. recommenced his sort of *set* at the Doctor, who, crabbed and irritable, often has grown pleased with the whimsical impudence of our halcyon-tempered fellow traveller. Reconnoitring the features of the recluse, he said, half aloud, yet to himself, "He looks fifteen years older when the sun's gone in! He's not bald or grey neither, and climbs a hill like a goat—he does look plaguy wisened, though!"

"Thank ye, Sir!" exclaimed the Doctor, amused in turn by the absence of mind exhibited by the other, real or feigned. "Yes, my head's black yet," and he pulled off the cap of a dock leaf he wears in the sun, to exhibit his cranium; "though my boys do pick out, sometimes, a white hair, a pretty snowdrop of

the grave, a bud of promise of the wan spring of the everlasting black year of death — my roof is not unthatched yet."

"Methinks, Sir," said the parson, "you should be glad exceedingly of that promise, and regard such snowy token of eternity with real joy. What is there in this world worth a thought, much less a wish—when once a man's thoughts are set on a better coming? Give me a few of those sweet spice cakes you bought for the boys, Major. *Man*—Doctor what's-your-name? *Man*, Major R——! *Man*—young gentlemen, Masters Joseph and Charles!

> '*Man* wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long——'

as Milton sweetly sung. But how 's that rhyme, by the bye? oh!" After pondering a minute,

> 'Nor wants that little long,—you know!'

"*That's* it, I think," he added, giving the faithful quotation with much emphatic pomp.

I know not how the talk began, but presently I found the retired Æsculapian vindicating his right to form an opinion on vital and palpable political changes, and vouchsafing to us a brief personal sketch of his earlier life.

"Educated," said he, "by a father of known classical attainments, I trust I became com-

petent to explore for myself the store-houses of the wisdom of past ages. Bred and instructed for a higher walk in the science I pretend to, than I now follow, domestic changes, and, to speak truth, such a devouring rage for literary distinction as made all other pall utterly on me, and left me hardly one wish beside, beyond bread and covering and a hut, these causes irresistibly drew me out of the path of professional success—which was to me in truth not success. Hence I have availed myself of such acquirement, no further than to make myself a *less* useless being on God's earth than I otherwise must have been. And yet, I like what others most dislike in that line, operative surgery. At the same time I am so utterly without ambition in it, that, if I *know* myself but in the least degree, I should feel no sort of pleasure, and but a distasteful pride, could I be Sir Astley Cooper, Bart. &c. &c. to-morrow! Yet no one feels more admiration than I do of talents thus devoted to lessening the ills of Humanity, and thus rewarded. No more glorious distinction can exist; it far surpasses Byron's,—but, it's not my hobby, that 's all."

I remarked that he was, in his exclusive turn toward authorship, like a lover so spell-bound by the charms of his mistress, that he has no

heart, and scarcely eyes, for beauty in any other object. "And may one ask," I added, "what have been your efforts in that all-absorbing *other* ambition?"

"Such efforts," he replied, "as the blind Cyclop made round his cave, or blind Samson in his prison-house! and with like result! For obscurity and the routine of toil in the world's service of daily exertion for bread, were to me, I confess, as grinding in the prison-house—to my intoxicated fancy as imprisonment and a doom of hard labour for life! What labour is not hard to a fainting heart and a wounded mind? But I must not be allured from my subject by the tempting topic of self-retrospect; so will only hint that the fatal Dalilah which beguiled me awhile to struggle shorn of my *only* strength, in a bondage to the world, was no other than my own heart. Now, voluntarily a truant from the road of worldly ambition, by tempting which I lost the only chance of the goal in one more congenial, I ask myself what is left me to live for? My children and my mountains! Yes, I call the last, too, *mine*, for they, like books, were also a passion and are still one, almost surviving that of literature itself:—for these I can enjoy in company with my family—books demand soli-

tude. A ragged library of my own culling through years, supplies much ancient, some modern lore for my lone study, now prolonged further and further into the dead of night, as I grow older, and the short time left for—(alas! what? Distinction? The time is past for that)—left, then, for the pleasures of Thought, frightens and shocks me. Sleep is death. I feel it a sort of suicide to turn into bed, shut up the windows of one's mind, and lay one's *self* out, before Nature demands the debt of rest as peremptorily as that of breath. A bad system, but I can't help it now.

"Even when rambling with my sons, you see," and he pointed to some old-fashioned books, "I do not travel without the glorious company of my dead—the authors misnamed dead, who cannot die!—the stars that never set, the *moons* of Lethe, defying all its fogs, and gilding even its 'fat weeds!'

"But I do not live always with mountains or with dead. I am as common on the road between Wales and London as its milestones; as dusty and as defaced in frontispiece, if not quite as short.

"In London I am a spy. One of the Little Unpaid. I feel a strange listless yet intense (reconcile this if you can) interest in human

doings; partly on my children's account, no doubt. I like to know what sort of England I shall leave them in. I was proud, was happy —I used to tell *them* I was, and bid *them* be proud and happy too—that they were born in green, beautiful, luxuriant England! in *sober-minded,* FREE, glorious, all-envied, incomparable Old England! queen of nations—gem of ocean, white sanctuary for all outcasts of all earth beside, even when smoking with ashes and bloodied as one great battle field! I compared their most fortunate lot with that of Continental children, doomed, by millions, like lambs to the slaughter, to the fate of famines and plagues; of ceaseless revolutions, invasions, proscriptions, tyrannies, imperial or democratic. I told them of the great murder of the innocents in burning Moscow—of the flower of the French youth, whose myriad sculls are now rolling like stones before the Russian plough! whose tender bones have arrived by shiploads in this very country, to manure our fields! I remembered the motherless tens of thousands, made so by the bloody Utilitarian *Robespierre,* et *id genus omne,* in the First French Revolution. I told them how *our* most blessed Constitution had made all these hor-

rors like mere dreams to *us*, the God-favoured few of this Isle; how, by "holding fast that which is good," by never departing from our "ancient way," Britons had lived, laughed, and died in the bosoms of their families, died the soft natural death, like a very flock, the peculiar care of the Almighty Shepherd, as if this white-walled Isle were indeed a little pen-fold for His chosen own in the great desert, and every favoured creature of it, even in life, as Lazarus in death—a lamb in Abraham's bosom! Mysterious God! even while I talked all was over! Even while I shewed them from all history, how when the rage of innovation, the mad inconstancy of the populace became paramount, there was an end to wise counsels; how that moment individual worth itself became worthless, the meanest individual guilt terrible, to the best and greatest,—how then all dependence on man's nature was lost; how good became bad—bad diabolical:—and pointed to *our* stability—*our* '*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari!*' even that moment, we became as one of those demented societies of men!

"Ever since this advent of a day of wrath for England, I have watched the signs of the

times, and become, as I said, a spy (an innocent one, I hope) on the actions of our new masters, vice-kings, the democratical populace——not hiding among my mountains, but burying myself, by long periods, in the (to me) deeper solitude of the Metropolis. In an obscure lodging, I *there* exchange my *old* Heathen philosophers for the modern *heathen;* I test —— and —— and a hundred more of *our* sages by those of antiquity, companions of my *Welsh* midnights. I test themselves of To-day and In Place—by themselves of Yesterday and Out of Place. I pore, till almost dawn, over some authentic record (accessible to all, but referred to by few) of bygone parliamentary and other doings of some flaming Patriot or Conservative, that very night spouting in St. Stephen's, what I shall read with my breakfast in four hours' time. I often thus 'track' many an orator by his dirty steps 'in the snow' of *his own* former purity (or pseudo purity). Again, I often condemn an evening to the public-house parlour, where congregate the tradesmen of a district—the very oracles of our new constituencies (the best of them too); and not saying a word, but sipping (not drinking) my glass, and seeming to read a newspaper, I soon am as unnoticed

as an empty chair, and all the merits of measures and men, and opposed candidates, are discussed before me. Often I put in a remark so neutral, that its mawkishness secures me the indifference I covet.

"Why are these pursuits to be called dabbling in politics? If, for example, at twelve of the clock last night, I in my room reading the Parliamentary Debates, of but a year or two back, was told *(in type)* by some noble 'Liberal' that 'the people of England are, he must confess, become strangely *lukewarm* to the cause of Reform!!!'——that he has 'travelled—inquired—*proved* the sad fact!' and I, at this present twelve of the clock, tonight, listening in the Commons' House, am solemnly told, *vivâ voce,* by the identical Noble statesman, that the people of England had, *at the very period of that lukewarmness*—now mind! —become so furious in their demands for Reform, that nothing but the fullest concession of it could prevent a revolution!!!—*both* assertions, remark, being made in the face of Parliament assembled and the whole kingdom—I, of course, form a certain opinion of the speaker and his speeches, and his trustworthiness; but what has this to do with meddling in politics?

It's a mere question whether Truth is violated or is not. It is not even a question of consistency—a man's tactics may be varying, yet his "public principle" fixed as the pole star—but his *assertions* varying, admit but one construction. What that is shall be unsaid.*

"What if another Ultra Liberal, ever venting his high scorn of those who 'lag behind the age,' should declare himself for the pious fraud system, old as the age of monkish imposture, and the disgrace of even the darkest—boldly declare, the virtue of swearing falsely to serve an end, *if* the swearer fancies it a good end!—the detestable doctrine of good ends justifying the foulest means—that black may be declared white, and solemn breach of truth sanctioned, and all trust between man and man thus abrogated in this liberal age? what, I ask again, has my indignation or my wonder to do with politics?

"On such, and a thousand such *self*-testimonies, of the merits of men, and their claims to confidence, I silently have built certain opinions, and go back to my mountains, a mourn-

* Vide Lord John Russell's speech in Parliament, so recently as during the Duke of Wellington's premiership, so shortly before the Reform Bill.

ing, indignant, confirmed thoroughgoing TORY, —glorying in that name, and casting back in the teeth of its slanderers their venomous slime, which will no more cleave hereafter to it, than will the actual mud of London streets, which 'Liberals' hurled at the deliverer of their country, cleave to the Wellington of history; or the crueller filth of slander which 'Reformers' hurl at the enlightened reformer of our criminal code, the reformer of the civic protective system, the constant advocate of *all* improvement, —cleave to the name of the most patriotic with prudence—most noble with scorn of mob-idolatry, of all British Premiers.

"Interest in taking any side I have none. Such as I have shewn are my means of observation. Such intellect as God gave me I bring to bear on the fruits of that observation. I feel within me a burning impatience of all oppression; and zeal to fury, against the private wretch who would fatten on public spoliation. I deem the doctrine of a people's good being but secondary to that of a king or a dynasty, so mad that I do not believe it ever was really entertained. But I don't the less distrust the "people's" governing themselves, if such a thing were possible; and if the sad alternative must be, would rather leave my children thrall

to one merciless tyrant, than to the tender mercies of the thousand 'friends of the people.' They would probably lurk secure from *his* lofty imperial eye, but from the lynx-eyed vigilance, the coward cruelty of the democratic hydra, not insignificance itself any more than innocence can screen its victims, as the shrieks of women and children and powerless cottagers, bleeding in the street, drowning in the rivers of France and all her cities, testified, and will testify, to shuddering Humanity, through all ages.

"I have felt a certain fiery something within me, from my earliest years, pervading my whole being, which I believe tends much more toward resistance than submission—a prying suspicion of received doctrines—a jealousy of throned authority, however old or bowed to however long and widely, whether based on popular belief or popular allegiance, on religious or political awe—a determination to judge for myself—a deadly hate of tyranny, as much fired by pity for the oppressed as by loathing of the oppressor; in short, a nature the very antipodes to that which forms the servile partizan, or tame unenquiring bigot in faith, politics, or morals.

"With this nature, 'Reform' should have 'marked me for its own;' I 'm sure, at least,

that these are the very materials Ultra Reformers rejoice to mould to their purposes—the very train ready laid that promises explosion at the touch of their torch. What has made it as uninflammable to it, as gunpowder over which water has been thrown? Reason, guided by *long-neutral* inquiry! No man lives more liable to be run away with by a cry of injustice and suffering inflicted by the strong on the weak: but I found it *false*, and I scorn the imposture. Hence here I am, an insignificant unit, indeed, yet perhaps something notable in *this:* that being thus by *nature* a red-hot *reformer* in the virtuous sense of that word; by nature, no doubt more akin to a Luther than a Melancthon; and last of all things, one formed to hold a legate's stirrup, or kiss a holy toe, were it St. Peter's own—that having no earthly cause of bias to Toryism, no interests, no friends, no advisers—yet having examined *alteram partem*, I may exclaim, *Veni, vidi* —— and resistless Reason concludes for me—'*Vici!*' and, lo, a red-hot *Anti*-Reformer!—(I use the word, gentlemen, here in your own *party* sense of it.)

"Do I abet corruption? Corruption in your teeth! Pray, why do I love to be *mis*governed more than you do? I will venture to apply

the same reasoning to him who never heard the name of me, the humble sharer of his sentiments. You say Sir Robert Peel upholds abuses, Tory corruptions; he must not carry the public purse. *Why* should he uphold? I beg to ask. *Poor* destitute gentleman! *He* is not to be trusted with it. *You*, gentlemen of the unstamped; you, the unwashed; you, the delegates of all England, are the only trustworthy! Oh, admirable reasoning! Are pickpockets abroad? Clap hands on the very richest and most independent man in a mob of ragged rabble, and away with him to the round-house. Depend on it *he's* the thief! What! *suspect* a *Sansculotte*?

"Who shall persuade me that this sudden and still growing mountain of grievances, in every quarter overshadowing the whole realm, is a reality? Why only now broke open this bottomless Pandora's box? The multitude of the new detections casts incredibility on all.

"Of the countless changes and bran-new measures, some, no doubt, are good; but the *spirit* in which they are thrust on us, defeats that good, by inuring the people to a spirit of revolt and intoxicated pride in their power. Plutarch tells us that Pompey, being invited to a superb feast at Epirus, admired the vast va-

riety of the courses served, but found out at last, that every one was formed of the very same meat disguised variously, and that was the flesh of the hog, for ever an *unclean* beast by nature's law, as well as by the Mosaic. So I would say, some of your many reforms, gentlemen of 'the feast of (the French goddess of) Reason,' may be possibly wholesome as well as handsome and high-seasoned, but they have the mark of the 'unclean beast' still. *Rebellion* is the staple *material* after all. This is my '*Politico*-Religio Medici.'"

NIGHT.

Shore of the Bay of Cardigan, near Aberdovey.

"LORD! what is Man?"

What exclamation more natural to the man standing solitary on a sea-shore by twilight, in his dwarfed self-annihilation of comparison, a man and Ocean? But *his* conclusion, unlike the inspired Psalmist's, is too apt to be "that Thou *should'st* regard him!" 'Terrible God, how great Thou art, and *I*, how small!" is, I fear, the too natural burst of the voice of the thought of uninspired man. The seeming almightiness of its power, the immensity of sound, the solitude, the perpetual motion and moan, the frequent thunder like heaven's own artillery, the sublimity of even its savage nakedness, (unlike the sister element, land, ever changing its outer fashion under the pigmy *friseur*, Man,) *qualis ab incepto,* that unimaginable "incepto!" yet, beautiful in even that barrenness, snowy-crested, many-coloured, and rainbow-beamed, like some savage Indian, *magna componere parvis,* gorgeous in his feathered and tattooed pomp of nakedness and

barbaric gems, beyond a courtier in his full-dress; the mystery of its limits, letting fancy roam to dim grey-blue shores and isles that exist but in the transfiguring mist and vast distance; all these combine in this stupendous antiquity, to overwhelm the thinking atom at its side with a mournful, a painful, yet still becalming, sense of his own infinitesimal littleness, and creation's infinite greatness; to irresistibly convince him that God and the system are everything, himself nothing. I speak not here as coolly canvassing the point theologically, but as echoing the untutored "impulse" of (I think) natural feeling.

If sleeping on the top of Snowdon makes, as they would persuade one, a poet or a madman of a sane man, more naturally may musing alone by the sea, methinks, make a sort of poet of even a Quaker. I have caught our Doctor's whim, who will mostly have the whole sea to himself, not even admitting his boys; enjoying its sullen solemn company to himself, following us at a great distance up beach or mountain-down that embanks its gulph sublime.

Thus I have been ruminating alone, and watching the sun go down in a "golden set," from this untrodden beach of huge blocks and fractured masses of stone, lying all about on

the myriad worn and polished pebbles, whose feeble hiss, fretted by the little surge of mere surf, forms a shrill tenor to the deep bass of the measured fall of each wave as it breaks down, along shore. Impassable at high tide, there is something in this sort of prison passage with but a temporary exit, and thus *under* the world, as it were, or rather its ramparts, for the cliff is high and unscaleable, which delights me, (now at least,) with its solitude thrice solitary.

After the descent of the sun, and the fading of that west in all its crimson and purple and golden flushes, that gave the idea of a celestial garden, the coming forth of a modest young moon of clearest silver hue, in a keenly-blue atmosphere, was almost as beautiful as that garden of heaven (gone, alas! like the dolphin's dying hues, evanescent as those).

The beautiful motion of some large ship at a soundless distance, its dwindled white sail made more perceptible by its happening to cross between my eye and that silver gem in its blue background, gave, I know not what, of almost ghostly life to the awfulness of that expanse of half a world without life—at least, any life analogous to ours.

"*An antiquity*," did I call this Sea? Alas for

the *babyism* of man, this thing of yesterday. Language, choose the most venerable on the earth, has no term that does not degrade the venerability of such an object: all must have reference to *our*—to human antiquity; and what are the Pyramids to one of these little tumbling bubbles of brine, looked at as composing the Ocean-brine, however changeful in its identity of particles, ever one and the same in its compound identity? Geology has proved that man is but a mushroom production even on his own planet; has for ever quashed his proud plea of primogeniture; has shewn that *his* boasted habitation was inhabited long before he was created.

I gazed and listened out into and over this weltering world, and strove to force thought like a tireless steed, to carry my impatient soul *back* up to the source of this all but almighty river, to its beginning, to what we might indeed term the "cataracts of Heaven," when fresh descending out of God's right hand; then forward to its hiding place, to the world's end—a Doomsday; and behind and before, if my presumptuous soul on that fainting steed saw any thing, it was Eternity—Eternity! And what fitter emblem of it than that round vast before me, looking infinity? "Older then than

human Death and Hell!" I apostrophised this ancient of ancients, as I stood, and a host of ideas rose dim, yet awful, like ghosts of all that gulf's pale dead, and began a ghastly sort of dance in my brain; yea, my brain of drab-colour! in me, one of the "convinced!" I had at this moment an interruption, but I will close my oceanic musings ere I interrupt *thee*.

"Yes," I thought, "this skeleton-idea, this Death of man, which haunts us so horribly in the closing shadows of life's 'eventide,' ancient as the horrid spectre seems, was once unknown to this beautiful garden; and this very water washed it, and threw up on some shore these same curious beauties of its own profound gigantic Flora, if not the same species, yet more beautiful, more magnificent, than these crimson streamers, and glossy russet, and brighter green leaves, that the slant long ray of the sun just now shewed so distinct, mixed with shells, and pale-blue pellucid jellies, glorifying the yellow marble of those now unseen sands, now buried up to this more uncouth border of its deep! And more mighty wildernesses, and plains, interminable green seas of wilder waving grasses proportioned to the colossal feeders, stretched away, soothing the majestic rolling eye of—

alas! what? Man was not—the elephant or mammoth? Their prone countenances were not erected to this upper glorious heaven above them, nor with aught but bestial impulse, to this lower green of majesty and floral and arborescent loveliness beneath them. Yet it bloomed; yet sun and moon rose and set: bloomed earth and lightened to the sun's flash this Sea's expanse—but not for Man!

"And when he came, 'this paragon of animals,' how did *he* look on this pomp and prodigality of Heaven? For what did he look on the creatures, but to enslave them? For what on the beautiful garden in which he waked, but to make it all over black and blood? the black of ashes of human homes, the blood of his own brothers? How did he look up to his God? As through a blurred and smoked glass, darkly, that distorted him into a monster, or, in the earthy mirror of his own terrors, which degraded him into a strong wicked *man*—his own likeness—a being like himself, made to sin and suffer, rarely to bless. In one place and era he saw a dominant ferocious *man;* in another, a wretched down-trodden impotent *man;* in another, a beast, or insect! Strange! Those very Heathens, who left legacies of true wisdom to posterity, made their gods mere winged beasts

of prey in the air, in man-shape! empyreal plagues, which like locusts owed their terrors and their impunity from their own *creature*, Man, to the wings of the winds and the inaccessibility of their heaven!

"For, however godlike it may be to suffer for patience sake, would mere man submit to flaying alive, to the murder of his offspring, &c. &c. but for the power of his torturers, murderers, to mount into the air, like their Medea, after their divine labours? No! Hence even those wise men looked at this superb vault, in its blue serenity, but as the dreadful sanctuary of their god-enemy! as the unscaleable aerial den, or tower, whither he retired, and at the green foot of which, *he*, pale wretch! could but crawl, look up, and bless with his lips, while cursing with his heart!"

I said I was interrupted. At the moment of my (perhaps) unorthodox apostrophe to Ocean, as the elder-born of Hell, considered as the place of penal sufferings for man's soul, the parson was just come up to me, behind, and never saw I hound prick the ears, or set off open-mouthed in full cry at the sound of horn, or scent of game, so eagerly as did he, at catching that awful word uttered by me, under the fancy of only the deaf ocean being beside

me. At first, indeed, he eyed me with a sort of surprise, and something like jealousy, as if by my gesture and rhapsodical tone, I had been rehearsing the part of the evangelical modern Pauls of his native land, and his *own in futuro* (if the "Sacred" works do but sell). Anon, he ran into an opposite suspicion, and accused me of gross impiety (when I hinted the nature of my thought) in supposing the world more than 6,000 years of age. It was in vain I assured him that he was "behind the age" (the religious age); that I but repeated the assertions of the most orthodox divines of the day; that the harmony of the Mosaic creation and the geological had been restored these several years; and that one of the most zealous preachers of revealed religion, was as distinguished a teacher of this subterranean Revelation, if I might venture to so call it; that Geology and Theology had shaken hands after the first little shyness, artfully fomented by infidels, deists, *et id genus omne*, for their own sinister purposes—a true holy alliance if ever there was one. All would not do; Ezekiel would not hear of this astonishing old age of his dear mother Earth, and I found it necessary (as indeed the Doctor tells me he has found it also with most of the Welsh clergy, who think about the matter at

all,) to be as delicate about touching on her age, as if she were an old vain beauty, that you offend mortally by starting so ticklish a question. So she must remain for our friend, a "lady of a certain age."

As the Parson retired to join our friends, and I leisurely strolled after, in the sweet and mild night, not quite unperfumed even there by odours wafted from already dewy night flowers of the sober-hued marsh slopes, into which the wall of rocks now declined, odours mingled with those of the sea's singular own, I reflected on my late reflections, and found I had left out the moral, a consoling one, which this sense of our own nothingness in the presence of Nature impresses also.

I stopped to look again far away into the now funereal-looking vast, with its mysterious moan, its agitated floor and dusky lighted vault of a few stars; and the half visible fronts of the pale grey crags, which I had just come from gliding beneath, took almost the semblance of gigantic tombstones.

And if Man be a worm, a grain of these sands, a nothing in this universe, and under the tyranny of this Time, man's woes also are nothing! nothing his terrors, his hopes, disappointments, despairs! Does my heart bleed

or quake for the coming ills of my country? Be she spared, or drenched in her blood by these revolutionists, I know, I see, where will be her place presently in this dumb *eternal* revolution of the kingdoms of the creation—with Balbec in the Desert! Is my blood boiling with some intolerable wrong inflicted on me by my brother-worm? I come to this eloquent wilderness of waves as to a solemn wood for meditation, and it tells me that I have only to fold my arms, smile at the injurious wretch, and wait; for he is already *dying!* Time is bringing up my enemy to judgment. Mortality has already on his ghastly head of bald scull the sable coif, the token of his death-doom being about to be read, and while I cry "Revenge," behold, I am crying against ashes, a shadow, nothing! Why should I gnaw my own heart because I do not obtain the distinction which I fancy due to my gifts among men? I think what Man *is;* let me look up and round, compare his mightiest monuments with *this*, the Creator's monument of His power in but one little star, with those ever burning over my head, and what now seem distinctions among men? I handle a dead bone, firm and unperished yet, and learn that even these brittle cancelli of its marrow-cells, have survived all

the generations of mankind yet born ! that the primeval giant-beast, its owner, was in his living strength while man was yet in his clod; was breathing before that clay was breathed into by the spirit of his Maker; ere it caught the fearful privilege *to be*, and started up, a Heart ! a Hand ! Tongue ! a Brain ! to throb, to agonise ; to work good or evil, to pour a burning eloquence, to *think* through all God's universe, and almost to pry around his throne ! And then, ah, then ! and soon, through clammy sweats and agony, to return whence it started: to be lost from the bosom: to be mastered by a vile worm: to lie mute as *this* half-animated polypus at my foot ! to melt, the quickest of all, into a loathsome mire ; *all*, all to but swell the festering masses, that crowd this blooming grave I stand on, or this vaster sepulchre, with its deep floor of antediluvian graves, (once land,) that rolls and roars their dirge before me ! The "immortal" and the "happy" and the "gifted," (so called,) will be all even as *I*, the despised unknown, the unhappy, the uninspired. Does a more reasonable regret prey upon me ? Has some heart too affectionate for its own peace gone to the grave without understanding mine, or believing its true feeling ? Has some one of those fatal cross purposes of hearts betwixt love and

friendship, which often tear asunder those truly attached, (but attached by a different species of tie, or differing degree of the same,) torn ours for ever? Perhaps it *is* reasonable to repine that death's black seal is set on that severance, that there is no language exclusively known to the Despairing and the Dead, by which all might be explained, by which it might be said, "*Now* I know the inestimable value of a helpmate, a soulmate, a mate for the mind rather than fancy; I know, the true value of the dream of romance, of "the lips never breathed on," how futile to the solid blessing of the unestrangeable second self, thinking *for* us, acting *with* us; the love-quickened, active Intellect, which admits not the drawback of such fastidious sensual scruple, which is neither widow nor mother, but if wedded to *our* mind, and true even to death, is eternally all *vestal!* *Now*, I could forego *my* romantic dream, which *you* could not fulfil, for the "sober waking bliss" of such *friendship* as yours; and you, for the sake of that return I *could* make, (a friendship *as* strong) could forego *your* dream of more romantic return, which *I* could not fulfil. But I stand here in the darkened universe by ocean-side, and these secret regrets, these recollections of a single, agitated, and wasted

existence, although mine, seem almost *another's* tale; lose all their poignancy. Life and death grow more equal, and our long home almost steals the attraction of a domestic one, and hearths and graves no longer stand apart in such dreadful contrast. I might whisper down some grave, "I am indeed the survivor, (little now to my wish,) but our lots have not greatly differed. If your very heart has perished from that empty bosom, that cage present to my too active sick imagination, so has hope from my hollow heart this many a day, hope, the very life-throb of the bosom! And if the solitariness of a sunless cell in the earth, *seems* dismal and dreadful to us, the living; it is not to you, the sleeper. But *this* solitude of a whole world, (in spite of its sun,) which a wounded mind and sickness of heart, and a bitterness at its core,—the *sæva indignatio* not to be reasoned down in the mind conscious of powers it cannot exert, makes round the decayed man; this solitude is indeed dismal, dreadful! A life lost, lost, lost in wishing, waiting, despairing; *this* you panted to see me spared; the torture of such issue of my hopes to me, your affectionate heart has been spared the sight of. The withered woe-worn man, upon your grave, might make al-

most your melancholy spectre laugh, to think on the character of the topic that agitated us—romantic passion! that embittered our little portion of better days, that leaves you in *your* world without a sun, and me, thus dead-alive, in a world I might almost call now my grave molested with one!"

I at last rejoined the Doctor at Aberdovey; and taking the ferry-boat, we crossed the star-light conflux (or "Aber,") of the fine river Dovey with the sea, and we all found lodgings at a lone public near *Porth*, leaving tent, horse, and pony, (our sumpter-steeds,) at this little watering-place.

Our talk turning on the food for thought afforded by the mighty Sea, our man of poetry, not business, told me he should steal a few of my thoughts for a Muse. In a day or two he presented her offering, which I choose to subjoin now. He has acted plagiary with much moderation.

OCEAN.—AN ODE.

CALM.

THE Sea! the Sea! be silent, Air and Earth,—
Back in dumb distance, World, while on the brink
Of this sublimer world of elder birth,
Boundlessly thundering, I stand and think,

Till thy last lights go out; thy mock-suns shrink
To stars, to falling stars; then vanish wholly.
Ocean! to me, loosed from life's latest link,
Thy look grows awful, and thy vast voice holy;
Like death's it murmurs "God"! weans man from hope's
soft folly,
Uplifting, lulling, filling quite with grandest melancholy!

Yes, by this *solitude* of half the globe,
Methinks I stand like a departing soul,
By Death's black sea, when shivering to disrobe,
Half pleased, half loth, her eyes pierce that dusk whole,
Limitless, moonless, for shore, star or pole;
Now spied, now lost again; as mine now strain,
And fancy faint blue shores, where only roll,
Vast o'er thy void illimitable plain,
Thy anarchies of seas to form a Main;
And all *thy* tides, oh, sable Sea! though vain
Mirage those "happy isles" some see or feign,
May tend, beyond man's bounded ken, to Heaven their
source again.

Ocean! another world of unknown creatures!
Another Nature on her rocking throne,
Bare-bosomed to the sun! our terrene Nature's
Indomitable sister, savage, lone,
In her green gulphy realm as Heaven's high blue unknown!
What, though man skim its suburb, down th' abyss
Pry, as our Newton pried round Heaven's high own?
Still shut as th' angels' own metropolis,
Her unsunned citadel's seclusion is,
Where skulls from this our upper world, lie like *its* shells
on this.

Despair grows patient, desperation calm,
While thy vast voice, far sounding solitary,
Moans to the moon its melancholy psalm ;
This beach, though wild, a water-worn rock-quarry,
Is, to the lost, Life's supernumerary,
As greensward alley in a moonlight grove
To happier men—this, *this* for the world-weary !
This, the wild walk and roaring grove *they* love ;
Whence they can watch the sun to bed when dreary,
Sinking in black and blood ; and mix such sky-born, airy
Pictures with *their* prophetic souls' of *their* ends sanguinary !

Strange solemn *sublunary* " world unknown! "
From *thy* " bourn" too no traveller returns ;
Man-forms at intervals come wavering down,
When some fierce purpose thy fixed limit spurns,
And there their bones stay in their coral urns.
Oh ! for the wand which *once* upreared thy waves !
What death ! what life ! what beat of fins ! how spurns
His dry death-bed Leviathan ! what graves !
What skeletons of unknown form, crusted with shells ! what caves
Of wealth ! wha wrecks of antique form ! what bones of Mammon's slaves !

These the *thought* sees, eye never : brimming high,
Thy gulph-waves hide th' astonishments they hold ;
Nor can man quite renounce humanity,
But that its touch steals with this weltering cold ;
What knells for broken hearts these waves have tolled !
Eternal partings sob in this low roar !
Some hope of hearts which but that one consoled,
Thy every night-storm blasts on every shore ;

The sailor's—transport's wife—that convict's self—hung o'er
Thy blue calm in his chains—hopes on, till Shipwreck roars
"no more!"

And worse than broken hopes or broken hearts
The hope *deferr'd*—the heart which *cannot* break,—
Moan along every coast thy gulf disparts,
What widows *curs'd* with hope! long loth to take
The widow's weeds!—what families which wake,
From dreams of the *poor* father emigrant's
Letters to bid their faint hearts cease to ache,
While he, forgetting all their woes and wants,
"Sleeps well" in thee!—what slaves devouring earth! * what pants
Of hearts home-sick to death,—to this *soft* sound groan dissonance!

Most Ancient! ancienter than *Death* and *Hell!*
Old solitary Thunderer *thou* wast,
(Strange secrets th' earth's consulted entrails tell!)
Ere Man *was*—ere our planet's bloodless Past,
That bloody reasoner rose to rule—and blast;
Not *armoured* he, though sevenfold *armed* with mind,
Oft at his own right hand's red work aghast,
Pale in the light of penal fires which shined
Fresh kindled for his soul, (hell's dismal dawn) behind,—
Yet cried to all things "war," and "woe," but most to his own kind!

Then Nature ceased to teem with mighty births;
Of her primæval works many a whole rank,
Known on Heaven's records, perished from the earth's,
In God's works leaving an eternal blank;

* The suicidal practice of "dirt-eating" common in slave plantations is alluded to.

Such as enormous on Ohio's bank,
In osseous ruins take their secret sleep,
To which ev'n Fable tells not when they sank.
Then did this new white *worm* sublime, *twice creep*,
To *this* world's seven-hill'd throne! made men and angels
weep,—
But to *thine* never! never *thine*, unconquerable Deep!

From half that world he vainly called his own,
Thou didst cut off the mock omnipotent;
Long didst thou keep her antipodal throne,
For Nature, from this mock omniscient;
Nor knew he where day's golden chariot went,
Nor dared to follow where thy rich waves sounded
Their wild march round the purple occident,
Down quite to Aurora's bed,—but, (fancy-bounded),
Stood by the "cataracts of heaven" astounded,
Thy trembling prisoner by thy infinity confounded!

END OF THE THIRD DAY.

THE

MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

FOURTH DAY.

ARGUMENT.

Are poets of the woods as fitted to judge of "men and measures" as citizen-poets? Shakespeare, a recluse. Southey, Wordsworth.

MORNING.

Near the Ystwith River, Cardiganshire.

I HAVE already claimed for this my unique medley of travel, rhyme, romance, dialogue, &c. &c. the privilege to discourse, not only of mountains, but '*de quibusdam rebus aliis*,' which mountain-air or mountain-quiet may set us thinking about. And what so natural to be suggested thereby as poetry? Hermit-poets, citizen-poets—*publisher*-poets, and poet-politicians, became our topics this lovely day. A fog—with its beautiful phantasmagoria of landscape—has amused us on our early road; and here we are, at last, breakfasting on a very

balcony of mountain! a sheep-nibbled grass-plot on a lofty point, above fog and dale, and open to the brilliant blue of heaven peeping overhead, the billowy vapour yet rolling like a silver sea below. A little lonely lake (I swear it shall *not* be a pool!) heaves softly blue before us. Tufts of the silvery flowers of the beautiful "maiden's-hair" are nodding round us.

That many-scented perfume, the aromatic odour of *mountains,* which all perceive in these places, without knowing its particular sources, the wild thyme and distant bog-myrtle, however, being most palpable—and which we enjoy on even the nakedest sheep-walk, is wafted on the warm air. A noble apartment! roofed with all heaven's concave, floored with the dewy greensward, whence the air of summer-morning seems to exhale like a breath, sweet and fresh beyond conception, as from some underground magic paradise of delicate sweets within that pure lap of earth! What a strange neglect of one of our senses, that was the medium of so much innocent luxury to the Romans, do English moderns exhibit! Oh, the detestable musk, and all perfumes whatever, indeed! How much superior one mountain-flower that has a scent, nay, the very grass! The "la-

vender" for his hostess's sheets *reads* pleasant enough in old Walton's book; but give me the fresher feast or none.

The sun has now evaporated the last gems of dew, to form a little fairy ring for the dry expansion of that next best luxury of a wild ramble—a virgin-*white* tablecloth! Thus we have secured two blessings, the olfactory and the ocular. But a higher ocular treat is that irregular round of water—a liquid air, which keeps gleaming azure as a sky, just before us, and heaving after each little breeze, as softly and (almost) as voluptuously lovely, as a beautiful bosom settling into a gentle heaving, after a panting motion excited by some love-surprise, while the tell-tale blue eye above laughs love in the favoured gazer's eyes. The small unveiled circle of blue clear sky above us, has betrayed me into this comparison. Beautiful-coloured wings of little birds keep skimming *our* lake's surface, and often dip, ruffling a moment the perfect blue sphere, which that surface and the reflected blue of sky, together complete. Pure and delicious it is to thought, that our water now boiling on our gipsy-fashioned triple stick, is dipped out of that unfrequented high receptacle of the waters of heaven, fresh from their aerial distillation,

without a touch or taint of earth, or mortal hands; that we drink after the pretty lark's beak only, or other such sweet and clean drinkers that wing their way to its brink.

Our Doctor—always an evil-hunter—has so many qualms, scruples, and fancies of abominations in diet, as regards the cleanliness of those to whom we must trust, that he declares that this consideration alone is a treat of itself worth a journey to a mountain top. Self-tortured, ever-imaginative, over-fastidious animal that he is, I know not what he had to do in our parts of the world; he ought to have been a Pythagorean in old times, or at least a Brahmin in these, to live on the literal *fruges terræ*, and nothing else.

Looking across our lake, we see but sky or its mist, as the land sinks suddenly there, in quite a precipice of a hillside (sloping down to a long pastoral sort of valley); hence its brimming basin looks to want a further bank, and one might imagine its crystalline blue swell of water to be overflowing there, and running over and down to some inundated country below.

As the whole mass of mist now grew alight with the resistless sunshine, we enjoyed the last of the pictorial drama of fog which had

amused us. For while we were in the vale below, every hill-top farm, every browsing cow or sheep that happened to *appear*, perched in a transient outbreak of the golden blue of the sun-light and the sky, took the oddest grotesque aspect thus standing, cut off by the whole white *wall* of fog, from the base of the mountain-side that uplifted it; an aspect of not only prodigious altitude, but of something supernatural and aërially beautiful. Every little yellow strawed fold-yard, or mossy cot, or flock of lambs thus insulated, and "unfolded in a spleen" to our eyes but a minute before the "jealous" fog shut all up again, became as "creatures of the element at play in the plighted clouds," the clouds of fog, whose rolling *plicæ* quickly were woven again round them into a thick shroud.

A church, across a deep dale, only partially revealed, was converted into a sea-beat grey fortress, with some dark outwork or bastion (which was in reality a clump of yews with their dim black), whose ruin the white deluge of that soundless sea seemed bent on utterly obliterating, for at every roll of its volumed vastness, the shape (for cathedral-ruin, or castle, or rock it was by turns) kept growing more indistinct, till like a melting edifice of

dissolving chalk before its tide, at last it vanished, melted quite away.

But now is the pleasantest phantasma, the bird's eye view of the deep valley below us, where we have been long hearing the calling of cows, and singing of girls invisible, in meadows equally a blank. Now a whole rainbow on the ground begins to peep, as we look down! for all the July flowers of some brightest green moist meadows are beginning to paint with their own sweet colours the now transparent veil that has hidden all from our eyes,—and behold! all is visible! Cows, girls, flocks, roofs of thatch, blue steaming river, wandering springs with a glitter as of quicksilver, and cowslipped meadows! Charming headlong perspective!

After some wordy war on the feverish topic of politics, we found relief in the *contrast* of the deep calm and silence of nature, the mild blue vault, the undisturbed atmosphere of our lofty yet not moorish breakfast place, in the low patter of that lonesome lake, with its floating flowers and large aquatic leaves, and its tiny waves washing its mockery of a beach (a foot's breadth of whitest pebbles, polished and pure, fringing a velvet sod,) over whose brink nodded wild flowers to their watery floral sisters in the liquid blue,

like nymphs of the woods smiling to young naiads, and smiled and gracefully curtesied to, in return. For as each gentle swell of the water softly subsided, it imparted to its native flowers a correspondent gentle sinking, suggesting the idea of such graceful obeisance of some "gentle lady, mild and beautiful."

The "silent occupation" and mild face of our placid Major too added somewhat of peace to the scene, which our poetical gipsy did not much disturb by softly beginning to recite to him the following sonnet, applicable to that occupation.

Where Surrey's favourite hill o'erlooks the Thames,
And Twick'nam's flow'ry meads fair maids invite,
The patient angler sits from morn till night
Pursuing his mild sport. And who condemns
His quiet pastime in the summer air?
He is the Muses' warbling son, and they
Ne'er suffer unbeguiled to pass away
The hours of him who is their special care.
For him the shade of Thomson shall arise;
For him sad Eloisa's Bard shall sing;
The fields for him assume their gayest dyes;
Naiad or Sylph from every lily spring;
For him old Faunus' voice shall cheer the skies,
And Nymphs and Dryads dance in festive ring!

"Now to whom do you, or you, assign the paternity of that stray sonnet?" inquired he.

"We thought of Wordsworth. We might,

but for the modern allusions, have thought of some high Elizabethan sonneteer; and Ezekiel bolder, and in spite (*not* ignorance of course) of the intrusion of Thomson, *would* father it on his own famed countryman *Rhys Prichard*, the Llandovery Vicar, author of "The Welshman's Candle," who "flourished," unluckily, in the days of Charles I.

"What a paradoxical age is this!" then proceeded our Rural Doctor. "An age that has utterly renounced poetry has made a poet, and no mean one, of a publisher. That is one of a little bouquet of such minor flowers of poesy, given to this same iron age by Mr. Moxon. It is no praise to say that Dodsley, though become a sort of English classic, could not have written anything approaching in beauty some of these sonnets!

"I think there is an elegant finish about them, a warmth of feeling under good command, a power of condensation as well as choice of images, well suited to produce that delicate *whole* in miniature, that exquisitely pencilled "Forget me not" flower of the Pierian spring called Sonnet.

"The cygnet crested on the purple water;
The fawn at play beside its graceful dam;
On cowslip-bank in spring the artless lamb;
The hawthorn robed in white, May's fragrant daughter;

The willow weeping o'er the silent stream;
The rich laburnum with its golden show;
On summer-eve earth's many-coloured bow;
Diana at her bath; Aurora bright;
The star of Eve; the lily, child of Light;"
* * * * * *

Here are more images than lines, and every one imbued with the very spirit of beauty, ideal or material.

"Who would not swear this was the most poetic of ages when a literary merchant thus walks hand in hand with a Muse? That in our days an eminent publisher should be hand and glove with the great is not to be wondered at, so much as they come in contact with them, and so much as even the folks of *title* love to see that title in a title-*page* also; but to escape the worldliness engendered by their avocation, and be found, as Milton says, sitting 'with their singing robes about them' on the green height of Parnassus, has something in it delightful to a romantic fancy."

Our Doctor was now in his element; and presently, as he sat on the mountain sod, watching the brilliant colours of the fish which lay glittering on its greenness, being just drawn out of the lake, he apostrophised the sun over his head (not, however, without having helmeted it against its arrowy beams by his usual

cap of dock leaf) in the words of a true poet. "There are a few lines that are eternally on my tongue," he cried in a rapture, "on such mornings as these, and on such emerald ottoman as this, and have been ever since Lalla Rookh's birthday! How the dev—I beg pardon, Reverend Sir!—how the devil—pshaw! how the deuce can a *bard,* one who *can* luxuriate in this roof of all heaven, and this lamp in the right hand of God, luxuriate also so much in roofs of some few feet height and span (however 'oversprawled' by mimic glories) and certain lamps dangling overhead?

'Blest power of sunshine, genial Day,
What balm, what life, is in thy ray!
To feel thee is such real bliss,
That had the world no joy but this, ["Not even *wine?*"]
To sit in sunshine calm and bright,
It were a joy too exquisite,
For man to change it for the gloom,
The dull chill shadow of the tomb.'

"It *must* be very raw and unpleasant, certainly! almost as much so as turning out of a brilliant drawing room, 'crowded to suffocation,' as the Mirror of Fashion would say, into the 'dull cold shadows' of some old park's trees, and the the poor wan light of a midsummer moon. Many, in this age of intellect, do, no doubt, drop their eyes as they do their wit, their spirits, in

such shivery 'turn-out,' and after enjoying with high exhilaration the light of certain poor greasy or waxen shifts against darkness, *yawn* homewards, lighted by tens of thousands of worlds! (a stupendous miracle!) mighty *worlds* turned into *lamps* for their path—little as eyes, but beaming heaven's own beauty! Yawn home, spiritless and not once even recollect that such is the fact, nor lift their eyes to that poor soundless roof of living sapphire, pillared on the extremes of ocean, that arch whose span is from pole to pole, whose keystone is God's throne! But can it be that *poets* can be thus insensible? Certainly not. Yet I suspect that even a poet who goes to bed at six A. M. long after sunrise "calm and bright," must find it considerably more "exquisite" to *lye* snoring in it "calm and sweet," than to sit in it, at least till the "balm" be scorched fairly out and out, by high noon-day."

* * * * *

I've lost a leaf of my journal! Weep, friend Hogg, for this *hiatu maxime deflendo!* Our 'Sayings' recommence, I see, in very *mediis rebus!* in a hot discussion about citizen-poets and hermit-poets! and their qualifications for the duties of political sages, moralists, men-menders! [authority for word, 'Rural Doctor.']

Constitution-menders, (and mongers), &c. &c. &c.

* * * * (Doctor loquitur) "What wilful or mistaken cant that is! '*He* lives among his lakes and his mountains,—he 's of too retired habits to 'catch the spirit of the time.' I've often heard and read this exception taken to his trustworthiness in political judgment, on what are called 'topics of the day.' Of his neighbour and friend Southey, the same has been said. I long to ask such objectors, whence Shakespeare drew his profound knowledge?—whence he imbibed that high-minded wisdom which, after two hundred years, is as fresh as ever, embodied with our language, lasting as itself, long since become axioms, the very Holy writ of Philosophy? From the society of link-boys round the playhouse, or of despised poor players, at a shift for their next meal? (no diners-out! no 'hip-hip-hip!' gentlemen.)—Whence could the humble, runaway deer-stealer learn it? Whence, but from combined thought and solitude? Players might enjoy their own and a few poets' society at the Mermaid or a patron's board, but the door of high society was barred to them. A play *writer*, as well as player, like Shakespeare, (and many others), must have lived peculiarly in solitude—

in an ideal world, only exchanged for the chilling and engrossing one of hungry Necessity, little admitting leisure or sphere for personal observation." I remarked that so extraordinary a mind as Shakespeare's could not be adduced in aid of any general argument.

"Surely it may," he rejoined, "unless you maintain that it was supernatural. We none of us claim miraculous powers for it; therefore he affords example in point, that solitude and unworldliness do not deprive a man of a vast reach of *available* sagacity, a truly 'learned spirit' in human dealings. He was a mere man. That 's enough for my argument. But, remember, as counterpoise to the advantage of his height of genius *above* some more modern sages, I have to bring his sphere of life *below* them. Compare Shakespeare's habits, in the house of his woolcomber father, or in Sir Lucy's park with loose companions, or in London, afterwards (as I've said before I think)—compare them with the youth and manhood of such men as Southey and Wordsworth, and I maintain, that in spite of *his* stupendous intellect, it would be still stranger, if they with *their* intellect, joined to those advantageous odds against him, were *not* politically wise, than it is that Shakespeare with his untutored intellect and wild life *was;*

that he became the oracle he has become to succeeding generations.

"But it is unjust to his contemporaries to regard him as the sole light of his generation in this intuitive sort of wisdom. Whoever reads them finds, in their dramas, as in his, a profound knowledge and beautiful morality, and *tact* in dissecting human character, and tracing the springs of human action; not so abundant indeed, but the sample little inferior to his. We ought never to mention Shakespeare without them, as adorning his era. 'Shakespearians,' I call them, and even that almost concedes the palm to him too exclusively.

"Webster was a parish clerk. Fine and solemn as well as *worldly wise* philosophy abounds in his 'White Devil, or Vittoria Cor."

"What, what, what? Doctor, what?" Mr. Evans exclaimed, laying his ear down to the speaker as he sat, to hear, though he looked ready to disbelieve his own ears, if he *had* heard aright.

"*White* devil? Who saw it? Where is such a thing believed? Black with a tinge of sulphur or so, is the creed of both conventicle and church! *White* never *can* be orthodox or evangelical. 'From all false doctrine, heresy, and ———'" he broke out solemnly.

"Oh its only the name of a play, sir," the Major said, laughing. But Ezekiel reproved him by a vast elongation of his diminutive white face and a shake of the head, muttering, "*Play*, indeed!" and appealing with his eyes "white upturning" to Heaven, like a martyr at the stake, as he stood with his back to the tree, at the foot of which sat the heterodox man of the mountains; while he muttered to himself a sort of declaration of faith—his *Religio Clerici*, "angels white, ghosts white, devils—*black!*"

"Cowley," said the Major, "somewhere writes that thinking—the *habit* of thinking—is the thing which makes all the difference between the solitude of a god and that of a wild beast."

As our parson was now roused to attention, his deafness did not prevent his throwing in a remark or two, though he heard very imperfectly.

"And pray, Doctor," he asked, which is *your* solitude? The wild god's or"——— the boys by tittering surprised our Major into a laugh, but he turned it off by saying,

"I don't know whether that's a slip of your tongue, sir, or no; but hang me, if it isn't a happy hit, chance or aim! 'A *wild god!*'"

"Aye," quoth the Doctor, "a divinity with such relation to the true gods, as a wild man of the woods bears to humanity—true! It *is* a thought!"

"What, a great big monkey, an ouran outang, 'pa, do you mean?" Charles inquired.

"Pshaw!" cried the blank man of the woods, "*no*, boy, *no!*" drawing himself up—"a *real* man, but—run a little savage." Then resuming —"No doubt there may be a kind of jumbling of those two sorts of solitude," said he, rather pompously, "which is not ill expressed by our friend's 'wild god.' The worst of it is, a man usually carries into his solitude a self-gnawing heart or a festering memory, and then the 'beast' is apt to predominate. I always think that monkish but not unpleasing legend of Paul the Egyptian hermit, the first Christian one, and St. Anthony meeting in the desert, affords a parable of the effect of *unhappy* solitude. Paul, you know, when in the bloom of youth, had flown his home and friends in the persecution of Decius. *His own brother-in-law was his bitterest enemy.* St. Anthony coming to visit the hermit—now the poor old Paul, 'a worn out man ready to restore his bones to their parent earth'—found him making his home of a lone ruin, far in the uninhabited wilderness,

in the remains of the *mint* of Antony and Cleopatra. Now, it afforded only a cave, a little spring of pure water, and some date trees to this first Christian solitary, besides an ancient Egyptian palm tree, whose broad head was his roof, and whose fibrous net-work of the boughs supplied material for rude clothing. So there he had spent life, betwixt the lifeless desert and the serene melancholy of cloudless sky, among the ruins—eloquent ruins, no doubt, to him!—ruins where she who swallowed more than the ransom of princes in a wanton cup, fashioned her monstrous wealth; and presently was glad to owe her escape from pacing Rome's streets, a manacled slave behind a car, to the mercy of a loathsome worm! But what I was going to say, is, that Anthony approaching saw a *visitor* going in to the poor old man; but it was neither man nor angel, alas! but a friendly *hyena!* What a symbol of the character of mourning solitude and the kind of company apt to 'intrude!' An hyena! A pleasant sort of grinning 'Paul Pry!'"

"But to finish our debate," I remarked, "will you not allow that the actual stage, where the high drama of state affairs is to be enacted, is the best school for a politician—I mean a great

metropolis, or wherever great masses of men congregate?"

"Yes," quoth the pleader for the wild woods as a political seminary, "if he could be 'among them, and not of them,' — walk like a god,— catch none of their moral pestilences;—if his soul could at the same time study mankind and dwell 'like a star apart.' But that, I submit, cannot be. When I mark how the constant whirl of the excitement of city-life can turn even a gifted brain, render a superior mind frivolous, and fine sensibility mischievous, and even a warm patriotic heart treacherous to its country's true interests,— peace and social order;—I say, when I see, with regret, all this perversion of character springing from a man's being a 'man of the world,' as it is called, a brilliant guest at great men's boards; *hence* bound in the gratitude of friendship and good-fellowship to espouse their political side, and 'to party give up what was meant for mankind;'—*hence* become the mere sport of chance, according to where it throws the yet neutral *sage*, ready to become a servile tool on the side of Majesty in some eras, or a 'great unpaid' laureate to the 'Majesty of the People' in others—I turn sickened from

such City Solons, and find as much wisdom at least, and more prudence in the political sage, who lives aloof from the Babel and its many-tongued stir.

"I *trust* the whisperings of the Egerian grove, inhabited by *thinkers*, however I may bow applause to the brilliant *impromptus* of red-hot patriots over wine, when changed by party into *actors*, when the spirit moves such to remodel or destroy their country's most venerable institutions."

"Then—you—would—say," *gaped* the Major, breaking a yawn of unconscionable length into many, "that *Mount Rhydol* and dear old *Grassmere*, with its green quiet mirror of many mountains, where I've fished many a sweet cloudy day, is a better hot-bed for politics than—"

"A better soil, if you please," growled the other; "for the very reason that it's *not* a *hot-bed!* I don't talk of a *born* hermit of the mountains, who never leaves them; such persons, except in the peasantry, are hardly to be found, much less such meddling with politics; —but I maintain that even *worldly* Talent to bring forth good fruit,—not poison, not the fruit of Milton's hell, not bitter ashes,—*must* be screened from the fervid influence of even

that world. I would compare the germ of philanthropic wisdom, of a beneficial thoughtfulness for the unthinking multitude, to the seed of our wheat, the staff of life! Expose it to the full sun at once, and all day long, and when will this blessing of half mankind rise beautiful in its green sheath? You must withdraw it from even that necessary heat, the beam must be tempered by a veil of mould; you must hide it in a seeming grave, and the grave will prove the cradle of its germination. Wanting wholly the cool dark medium of meditative solitude, the most valuable mind exposed to the constant hot atmosphere of 'the world,' and nothing but 'the world!' (fountain-head of politics though it be,) may perish to every good purpose."

After a remark edged in by myself, he said to Major R. "I'm glad to find you familiar with the locality of one of our poets of peace, by your mention of places just now. I can't take an apter character to illustrate my theory than the one you hint at. Let us imagine a man undeniably possessed of all advantages of a well-educated English gentleman, with the feelings of a poet, leading the most blameless of lives, welcomed in all societies, but preferring that of a chosen few, and of the 'Patri-

cian trees and patriarchal underwood,' like Sir Henry Wotton, like Evelyn, like a hundred more of the 'wise and good,' that must occur to your memory. Now *suppose,* for argument sake, this man to live over a year in absolute ignorance of the new 'quick march' and 'movement' order of the day in England, which make that space about equal, in violent change, to a century of the 'old times.' A year! What may not be done (at least attempted) in a year, with so many amateur-statesmen, all eager to bless us, all prompt to point out and correct each other's mistakes (the least of them vital), with new improvements struck out daily, no time lost in sifting their merits,—a Pandora's box of grievances in every patriot hand, to inspirit one, and the infallible remedy, the antidote, the precious Hope at the bottom! in the holder's head! Well, he comes from his mountains, 'thinking, good easy man, full surely,' that his England is still *Old* England, comes to our reformed Metropolis! A 'confused hubbub' within the King's own hearing, nay, from the very place where he takes counsel, astounds him! Of course he comes in his simplicity of reverence for the *Three* Estates, of horror of Popish ascendancy, due respect for the First Magistrate of the commonwealth

(who to be respected must not be a shadow); respect for that august, middle bulwark of our liberties, towering between democratic encroachment on one hand, and regal usurpation on the other (which to be respected, must not be a mere registration office to the Commons); he is full, God help him and enlighten him! of all the 'old saws' of sages, *not* 'modern instances;' he remembers even one Algernon Sydney, who gave his blood for *true* liberty, declaring *that the wisdom of man could not devise* a nobler form of Government than that of *the well-balanced Three Estates.*

"I say, Sir, he enters London, and he hears this hubbub, and what's the first articulate yell? 'What's the use of the Lords? What's to be done with the Lords?' What the next? Why, a private Roman Catholic attorney from Ireland, denounced yesterday *from the throne* as a curse to his country, bellows, '*I'll* teach you what!' and forthwith the press teems with this vulgar brawler's '*plan* of Reform,' as it's called; which is, to *retain* these said Lords indeed, but only as pompous laughing-stocks, monarchs in paper crowns!—the frowning senators of elder Rome retaining each his place in the face of the barbarians possessed of the Capitol! By no means to thrust them *from* the

Judgment-seat; oh, no! merely give a rejoinder *veto* on their judgments to the Commons!

"Next, he hears a less double-dealing Privy Councillor to the 'Majesty of the People,' speaking out plain for instantly abating this nuisance the House of Lords, outright, in pamphlet and in Parliament! (for these are 'all —all Honourable men!')

"Down to the very dregs of the mob-sycophants, down to the man who rakes in the nasty 'secrets of the lazar-house,' to stimulate the depraved appetite of the Age of Intellect, every one has his audacious and silly 'say' against the integrity of the British Constitution, and is not hooted, not pilloried, not indicted, neither bled nor blistered on the head; although each declares that this total subversion is merely *adapting* the Constitution to the new necessities induced by years! My sage flies for relief from what seems his own delusion of some feverish dream, to what he learns is the *ministerial* journal: 'Here,' says he, 'at least I shall find what all this means; what steps are taking to save my country from these madmen, to save the sole saviours of our rights, liberties, lives—for Ministers are the Constitution's guardians—the King's friends, 'friends' of law, loyalty, and authority, as well as 'of

the people!' He reads there an echo of the very subornations to treason, the reckless resistance to the mildest forms of subordination, which so astonished him in the trash of the pamphleteers, and in the yells of the destructives! The Lords are still, with this *Ministerial* oracle, a *nuisance*. The Commons (the Long Parliament blotted from remembrance) are to be our six-hundred sovereigns, including a man who calls them as many 'scoundrels;' and not only is the King insulted, but the 'expediency' of retaining him as a convenient idle *form*, is actually mooted, like the question of voting one office-clerk supernumerary or not!

"And, lastly, to crown this monstrous mystery (to *him*), here is this very 'people,' that is, the July-bitten section of the English, groaning most piteously for the down-trodden condition of the democratic branch of the Constitution! oppression of the Lords, &c. and founding the whole justice of these demands of retribution against the two other on their intolerable usurpation of undue power,—as proved (clear as moonshine!) of course, by the complete helpless passiveness with which each is forced to endure these fatal indignities,—the Monarch from the very organ of those 'with whom he has taken (*not* 'sweet' but) bitter

council,'—the Lords from what ought to be their equal colleagues, not their angry peremptory dictators. Have you followed me and my woodland philosopher? Now what I would add is—that *he*, thus coming fresh to this Bedlam broke loose, would feel, judge, *act*, if called on, as would become a true 'fine old English gentleman.' He would see instantly that this state of things was perilous, no glozing—no, not the devil's own with the serpent's tongue—could persuade him that it was *right*, much less glorious. The sheer ludicrous madness of the last-named anomaly, of the flagellant party roaring out their pains against the flagellated, must expose the lie.

"But now suppose a talented 'worldly' man possessing *some* features in common with my unworldly one, my hermit, my 'god Pan,' what you please, is it equally sure that even with equal *natural* sagacity, he would see with equal clearness the terrors that these violences, these distractions, these incentives to mob ascendancy, hang over his country? No, by the mass! Nay, I would not *swear* that in some evil hour, when 'Bacchi plenus,' he might not (his garland dropping off the while, like poor Silenus's,) after 'hip! hip! hip!' turn Constitution-monger himself, and concoct one

for twelve millions of us, as handy as he might a bowl of punch, not omitting plenty of lemon."

"It's pleasant enough to have one's ears tickled, and be sung to sleep in a garden," quoth the Major, "but—"

"But unpleasant to have poison poured into 'em, as the price of it," concluded the Doctor for him; "To win one's heart with the mermaid music, and then without any claim on earth beside, to one's attention, insist on becoming one's doctor, and playing the devil with one's constitution, is like—"

QUAKER.—"An unfair pugilist getting 'within his opponent's fence,' as they call it, and squeezing up to his bosom merely to deal an ugly blow."

DOCTOR.—"A man who has had to do in his day with the really high, however over warm, heart of the upright old Whig party, ought not to descend to the *Rump*. For my part, I luxuriate in a certain bard's proper ware, 'I dare be sworn he has bewitched me to him,' (for in *philtres* of the Muse he was wont to be too well versed,) but after administering his warm provocatives (to ascetic virtue,) his sweetmeats for the fancy, to *dose* one so, is like"—

ONE OF OUR BOYS.—"Is like showing one hot spice gingerbread and sugar-plums, then saying 'Shut your eyes and open your mouth, and *see*

what God will send you!' and in comes, when you trust to this godsend, a nasty, bitter, *Scotch pill,* as black and big as sheep's dung, the nasty sly little funny man!" Thus made *his* rejoinder the young sprig of Toryism, cloaking the boldness of his put-in under a "bit of fun."

MAJOR.—"You 're right, my dear boy; what have '*affaires de la cour*' to do with affairs of the rump? as your father said.

"Quid habet illius, illius
Quæ spirabat amores?"

"Now," resumed more gravely our rude orator, "I would never believe that my imagined man of woods could ever be induced to thus push himself forward, and push arguments *ad absurdum*, on *any* side. It is the eager *hanger*-on of party, *not* the cool *looker*-on, who on each side is ready to carry out abstract principles, good in themselves, to extremes equally wicked, mischievous, and detestable. It is *he* who will push Whiggism into Radicalism, the doctrine of *possible* necessity for popular resistance *beyond* the Constitution, into a wholly optional obedience; he who will urge Toryism, the doctrine of Constitutional obedience, into a slavish, blind, *passive* obedience to the worst tyranny.

"It is *he* who will not see that even the principles of 1688 themselves, are nothing in their nakedness, without *a discretion* in the practical administrators of them; that it was the said identical, glorious *principle*, which we all are proud of, the right on *dire necessity* to depose our rulers, which led to two such different issues as the murder of Charles I., at which the people wept, which *all* parties condemn; and the dethronement of his son James, which not one of all parties can be found to condemn.

"Now what—now *who*, I ask, is to decide that momentous point of the *necessity* having arisen? What *can* possibly decide it but the most gravely impressed, the most cool-headed, pure-hearted men in the kingdom?

"Is it not obvious, that every blemish, every speck, nay, perfections themselves, may be called a *necessity* for this popular resistance, if *they* only who *love* resistance are to determine what *is* this dire dreadful necessity, and what is not? A virtuous and *retired* Englishman of education and strong sense, and a *thinker*, will be worth a hundred partizans, however high, who are also actors. Has *this necessity arisen, or has it not?* Posterity will hardly credit that such a question was asked at this day. Yet, at this question, we are stunned by voices shout-

ing out against civil misrule, ecclesiastical tyranny, corruption, the Lords; invoking heaven and earth, the quick and the dead, Wakley and Roebuck, law-maker and law-breaker, or both in one; rebel or papist, for leaders—Hampden, Sydney, Russel, for examples. *They* value not their heart's blood 'three skips of a louse,' as Swift's lady's maid says about her purse, (which she, however, '*thought as safe as her maidenhead*,' please to recollect,) *not* they, in the cause, the glorious cause of freedom! 'the cause for which Hampden died in the field and Sydney on the scaffold!' How affecting is this devoted gallantry! How! *blood?* Shed your pure blood? Dear, noble gentlemen, do let Mr. Wakley take it more quietly with his Lancet, and *be sure*, from the *head;* let *fundamental* remedies be tried on *yourself;* and when you are cooler and better, let us whisper you, 'you are about 150 years behind the age,' for so long is it since the death of William Lord Russel, and since the expulsion of James, since the state of things in England has been such as to allow any excuse for an Englishman's setting up such a 'cry,' except craziness or idiotism. Your blood, gentlemen, is *not* now exactly the thing wanted by your country, (it *was* then,) but your good

sense, and the obedience of a free subject, and its example to the multitude. What is wanted *now* is, *influential* men to preach and practise a wise use of the blessed privilege of perfect liberty, which that nobler blood long poured out, *has* already secured to us. The Many have caught a dog-day fever from France; they are rushing headlong *somewhere;* they will have it to a temple of the goddess Liberty, and a millennium to be quaffed and caroused in there. Blood, and crime, and howling misery, and want, are confessedly in the vestibule, they stand full in the way; clouds and darkness rest on the 'beyond.' Yet, they long to 'rush in.' Do *you* tell them that angels themselves might 'fear to tread' there; godlike men *have* trod in vain. If you *will*, instead, inflame them with these cries, and stand cheering them on, you are *my* personal enemy, be you who you may; you are every good man's enemy, for you are the enemy of your country!

"And now, gentlemen, let me ask, have I *misrepresented* aught in describing the fearful present aspect of our country? Strike out all mere expletive terms of anger, and surely it is a picture that *no* party can call over-coloured. Now, I chance to have got in my pocket an extract from a work by a *living* actor in this ter-

rific farce, which paints the past, the period when Russel died on the scaffold, the period when those patriots roused themselves, cried the alarm to their country, (no *false* alarm,) which the parrots of this day re-echo; when they resisted, protested, bled, and died; *acting* the high part which these modern mountebanks travestie. I will not take the word of any man living *but one;* but their own oracle, even Lord John Russell, himself"!!!

"Is it from his tragedy of Don Carlos?" asked the Major, "or from his Essay on the Causes of the French Revolution, where he assures us that the precise change which the Reform Bill *has* now made in the representation, must endanger a "CONVULSION" in England? or is it—"

"No; it's from his Life of Lord W. Russel, (or Russell as he spells it,) and I entreat you to but mark (and then lift hands and eyes,) the contrast between *this* present year of liberty, democratical liberty to insult King, Lords, and Commons, preach revolution, urge dismemberment of the monarchy, with *that* year of *monarchial* outrage on all the rights of man's body, and even soul! Mark, I pray you, the *fairness,* the *good sense,* of these men, in their prate about imitating those martyrs to a *real* tyranny, heroes against real

danger, real despotism, the most goading, the most atrocious despotism, awing the judgment-seat, invading life and the liberty of the person openly! *Imitate!* why, to do so, you must *now* rally round these Lords and this throne you revile! The armed spirits of those martyrs, could they burst their urns, or leap down from their heaven, ready-armed in the cause which won them these immortal urns below, those thrones above, *would* and *must* be found *now* waving their swords of fire before and round all that *you* are invading, for in them is *now* involved the salvation of the Constitution they died to preserve; and therefore, before that door, that throne, as the last unforced gate of that Constitution, would those resurrectionary patriots be found awful, standing; as the best *living are* now seen, standing inactive, but at bay; unemployed, but waving each the moral sword of convincing eloquence, resistless as truth; whence, I do trust in God, they will no more be driven away than the guardians of Paradise could be by the first foul Enemy of Man.

"I repeat that to imitate *them*, as you bid us do, we must evidently rank ourselves on the opposite side to you, the tyrant majority; to you, the manyheaded; you, who now occupy *precisely* the place of the Monarch Charles, *who connived with papists* to enslave this Pro-

testant kingdom; who actually received bribes to do it from the French king; *you* who fill *now* the place of the Court's creatures, who '*purged*' the Judgment seat and Senate, as you would fain do our's, (witness Bristol, witness Wetherell out of Parliament, Gully and Wakley in!!!) who resorted to force, as you are willing enough to do,—to all base artifice and lying, as you *do*,—to *coerce* the free, and suffer no sort of freedom to exist, but their own freedom to act their own wild pleasures, without regard to the sober wishes of others, equally free-born."

ALL VOICES.—"The extracts, Doctor! the extracts!"

"Thank ye, Sirs! Yet once more *mark the then state* of this Press—*now* a 'fierce democracy' in its very self! at least a lever in the hands of the public to do all the *work* of a Democracy, if not more. Mind! This is the Noble partizan's *own* picture of that time.

'The press, that last refuge of the worshippers of Freedom, had become a fortress of her enemies. The writings of the Whigs were *suppressed*, and calumnies *against* them published, *in violation and contempt of the laws*.' (Vol ii. p. clxxvi.)

'The justices refused *sufficient* bail in cases

of *selling libellous pamphlets* (the *Roebucks* and the *Hetheringtons* of the Papist Duke of York, and anti-English Charles) 'one of which Justices,'—my lord tells us, 'told a woman, Jane Curtis, who had *sold a libel against himself*,' (he thus judging in his own cause,) that 'she need expect *no more mercy than* a wolf which should come to devour them.'

'The Whig newspapers, which were active in bringing to light acts of oppression and injustice,' (as the 'Tory' ones did the O'Connell and Raphael seat-selling conspiracy, the Roebuck rebellion against the Stamp laws, &c.) 'were suppressed, and the writers of them imprisoned' (as the friends of the liberty of the press would gladly serve those). 'Great pains were taken on the other hand to direct the public mind into the road of abject servility' (to Democratic ascendancy *now;* can abject servility be carried further than that of popular candidates?) 'Roger L'Estrange,' he tells us, 'outrageously libelled the principles and persons of the *Opposition*' (this needs no altering). He said among many other things that 'a citizen's skull was but a thing to try the temper of a soldier's sword upon.'

"Now need one word be added of comment on this contrast to *ours* of the aristocratical branch of

the English Government, except Compare and Judge!!—'Why, you Radical blockhead,' can one refrain from saying, 'whoever you are there bawling in London, don't you *see*, that it was *not your* England and mine, for which those wholesome severities, those desperate and bloody cures, insurrections, popular movements, deaths on the scaffold, became necessary; but *another* in all but the soil: an England lapsing fast into slavery to two tyrants, Pope and King, *leagued* with her old enemy France, (leagued too, for *money!*) to sell her into that servitude of body and soul!—it was not to overthrow her limited monarchy, those patriots were banded, but to *restore!* Neither the first Revolution nor the Restoration, had secured us that blessing. Men in civil war are ready to bless and welcome the worst tyranny, or tyrant, that will save them from sword, fire, and famine. So the tyrant will save them from being torn piecemeal by insurrectionary mobs and factions, he may *shackle* them, and welcome. Hence Charles was received with open arms. The rescued were too happy to stipulate for freedom. They did not even remonstrate, like them of old, by asking what he would leave them —he had not even to sternly say, 'your lives!' They were so jaded, so soul-sick under military

and other tyranny, that they even asked no more, and 'our lives!' was the only humble tacit condition which this great nation demanded, forestalling the tyrant-saviour's concession.' Is *our* press all on one side? Is *our* press gagged? God forbid it ever should be as it now is in France!—yet——"

Here our friend gagged *himself*, by a most prodigious mouthful of a hunch of his own brown bread, snatched in his eagerness of oratory; and to own the truth, I was not at all displeased to see this 'gagging act' of his.

"So now we've done with politics," I put in, "suppose we adjourn down to the river? It grows high day, and the shining water, winding betwixt the great overhanging trees, looks so cool and tempting, that——"

A plague on politics! that very bread I fancied had ensured us a respite, turned in our Doctor's hand to politics, as in Midas's every thing did to gold—for, hoisting his huge hunch of it, he exclaimed "*Liberty*, sir, *Liberty!* This drunken *license* to rob others of *their* rational social Liberty, which some men clamour for, is as much akin to that blessed gift of God, (indeed 'like the air we breathe,') as that detestable ardent spirit which you *may* indeed distil from this corn," (and he bit at it, like a hyena

again,) "that liquid food of fire, for madness, crime, ruin, rage, and death, is to this fine temperate blessing—this staff of life!" and so saying he made such another shark-like snap at this substantial flower of rhetoric, in zealous proof of its ever-welcome nature, that he not only left but a mean scrap, but bit his fingers, and in the wrath of pain and politics combining, almost choked himself in bolting it. Seizing the opportunity, we all spoke at once, while *he* could not, and thus *carried* a motion (Radical fashion) for an adjournment to the valley and the banks of the Ystwith.

As our halting times on this day were amused by readings of the last story already finished, and given to thee, Friend Hogg, without the interruptions *we* experienced, expect no more Miniature-romances this day. In place of one I shall merely here insert a second part of that Ode on the Sea already sent. Calm and storm render the sea a twofold object, exciting emotions as opposite as the most opposed sources of excitement. Please to append it to the former.

OCEAN, AN ODE.

PART THE SECOND.

STORM.

THE sea-dogs shall feast to-night, for the war is at the height,
'Twixt the powers that the world trembles under,
The Sea and the sea-vault join in terrible assault,
And roar with undistinguishable thunder.

Now regard your *souls'* estate, for your bodies 'tis too late,
Ye, who now in more than mortal battle baffled,
On wreck, or rock, or wave, hold brief parley with the Grave,
That yawns 'neath your rocking death-scaffold!

Pray, pray *for* them, ye who *feel* land's firm blessing, while *they* reel,
On the avalanch of billows plunging,
With such wild swill and sway as they 'd wash *our* world away
To rage sole in the elemental dungeon.

There a blue-lipp'd bloated Death, hunts whatever lives by breath,
Hunts dumb, in her Chase of mountain-waters,
Whose waves, like her wild pack, rage by thousands in its black,
At the work of her bloodless slaughters.

Woes not to be spoken, crying Fears of the heart-broken,
From all coasts—Dreams and Omens hover o'er her,
Behind her flying, fly, craving life for those who die,
And souls for hell or heaven fly before her!

When too late to repent, on the mind of swimmer spent,
She flashes some forgotten old iniquity;
To smite, smother, confound him soul and body—she is round him,
A shark-gnawed cadaverous Ubiquity!

Hark! 'tis a signal gun; but why regard that one?
Many more on many coasts every minute,
Boom once and no more! and each wave that reaches shore,
Has a death and a tragedy in it.

A ship struck with all its souls! where it beats and where it rolls,
Hark the shrill voice of agonized Woman!
Voice that more than words expresses, as 'midst beasts' in wildernesses,
One unrepeated shriek of the human.

A single shocking sound! by the rage of waters drowned,
Where the moon, burst through clouds in commotion,
Sees a babe at a bared neck, snatch one more draught on the wreck,
Whose next will be the bottom-brine of ocean!

Oh *those* are *men*, prepared for the stormy death they dared,
Ocean's intimates, companions of Danger;
What didst *thou* on that wild strand, soft thing of Love and Land?
God grant thee a quick dying, wretched stranger!

One has almost gained the beach—but he faints ere he can reach—
Hark! his cry with the hurricane's vying!
Vain cry! a coffined form not more hopeless, though the storm
Death's decencies denies to his dying.

For no ritual Death waits, human hopes and loves and fates,
On the fight of wind and wave hang suspended!
For those now gaily singing, a night like this is bringing,
A night that shall never be ended!

Wan wakes the lead-eyed morn: on this wreck-strewn beach
wave-worn,
Growls the Deep o'er the ruins he has spread,
Where one wind-beat, wild, and gaunt wretch, in sorrow or
in want,
Prowls lonely expectant of the dead.

Still, many a soft heart quakes, for those happier hearts' sakes,
Which no longer feel fear or commotion,
Unknowing that for them, after Death's wild requiem,
One of everlasting calm is that ocean.

EVENING.

From our Tents in the Valley of the Ystwith River.

THE sun of a truly *Italian* day is sinking behind the bold verdant heights that seclude the course of this beautiful stream, and spreading that pensive purple tint on the features of the world it is forsaking, which derives an additional charm from sleeping along sylvan scenes of pastoral peace, such as attend this part of that course. The shepherd-man (I know not why, the shepherd-boy is always the little hero of mock pastoral,) is loitering by his sheepcote of yet green hurdles, his day-toils done, except chipping some prongs for hay forks and rakes; the good woman, knitting

away all the while, loiters near him, a happy though ragged little one clinging to her woolsey apron, another in her arms. Their house, though it is not an earthen one, looks much like a huge molehill! its roof is so like mould, a rugged depth of repeatedly piled thatch, a deep bed for tall weeds and flowers, with another roof of orchard tree boughs. A very little meadow almost insulated by a placid reach and bend of the river, just holds house and cart shed, peat-stack, hayrick, and two cows, all visible to us without our once looking at them—being distinctly pictured in the unruffled water—we being on this opposite bank, encamped under a range of crags, with brushwood on every ledge. A quick mounting smoke-column shews that something for supper is not wanting at home; and a song from the man seems to express the shepherd-*boy* of pastoral in his light breast and blessedly vacant mind at least, if it is quite obliterated in his weather-beaten face, and, truth to tell, unpoetical, however warm-clothed figure.

The Rural Doctor was *not* political this evening, to my no small satisfaction. Yet it was not the peace of Nature, nor that fading pomp of heaven, nor the tranquilizing hour, methought, that had operated to lay the perturbed

spirit within him. Indeed, how the same being can enter with a ludicrous eagerness into a field of conflict so wholly inaccessible to him, and (one might think) so intolerable to a peace-loving man if it were accessible, is one of those enigmas in human propensities, which in a person of notoriety might be thought worth trying to solve. He now came to watch our Major's fly fishing.

"Would to God I were that man!" he broke forth, while sitting on an almost horizontal trunk of a tree, all over ivy, which, from the undermining of the bank, had been for years bowing nearer and nearer to the face of the liquid mirror that reflected it in summer calms; "To have lived where I was born, and die where I lived—to say to my children, pointing 'under that beech, or that oak, with its round shade, by the brawling shallow you hear, in our own meadow, I used to sit and make rush cages, when I was your age: and there my mother, I 'm told, used to set the old dark oak cradle (the very one you lay in) under its thick leafy head in the hot haymaking days, that the river might sing me to sleep, while she made hay in our meadows yonder. That older end of our roof that 's so thick with weeds and

so flowery it brings the bees round it, was the work of your grandfather—and that other end (faith! *that* looks plaguy *old*—it preaches, it preaches!) that was thatched by *me*, and *you'll* be old enough soon to put your handiwork in, for your monument of yourself;' or to stroll that orchard, and say, 'Remember, *I* built this beehive stand; look how handsome it is, a little pinnacle atop with its whisp! that's your father's *taste*, boy! The lark makes it his first perch, after getting up o'mornings from among the bluebells; and the poor robin, you know, often stands to sing his melancholy sort of song, like a poor starved ballad-singer coming after some gaudy-drest performers on their gilded harps and flourishing flutes——he poor lag-behind, only having his little breast painted a bit, and his pathetic pipe in unison with a decaying world. That beehive-stand may, with repair, serve *your* child's child: at any rate, that tree I planted will stand, I hope. Let me have that for my green tombstone, boys; I hate stone ones, and charge *your* boys not to cut it down."

The Major and I could not help bursting into a loud fit of laughter. "So the politics, the Parliament, the 'stir' of the 'day,' the *cacoethes scribendi*, all might go to——somewhere; while you, halcyon-spirited man,

listened to bees in the lime-trees, and coveted such an immortality as that! As the architect of a bee's palace;—such a posterity as that—your mountain-born boys of the sheepcote!"

"Even such an immortality!" re-echoed the other, doggedly. "Had I been *born* to it, I should have *happily* walked *within* that little sphere, instead of miserably prowling outside of a vast one, whence I am excluded."

"Do you mean," said the Major, "the sphere of literary fame or political power, or the 'field of glory?' Do you think my thrown-off uniform would have become you, Doctor, or my sash and plume?"

"Or my gown and band?" added Ezekiel.

"Why ask me *what* sphere? *Any* sphere of Greatness!—You smile. Do I say *I'm* great? I say that an ungovernable enthusiasm, fierce passions, perhaps as ungovernable once;—a nature, I 'd almost called volcanic—God knows the effects of fiery natures on their bearers' hearts are, often enough, like the all-burying, all-encrusting, eruption of lava in its red-hot softness, its death-black afterhardness and coldness! I say such a character was stamped on my brain, on my heart, on my whole inner being, by the hand of God Almighty; I being as passive in the infliction,

(is it not one?) as when Nature made this hair black, and this blood in my veins red. Now that such temperaments should impel to vehement action, in *some* sphere, is as surely natural as that fire should seek ascension, or a whirlwind vent, could that be bound down or this pent up; and the *yearning* of the Fire and the Whirlwind (to personify them) will not be to creep like a little jack-a-lantern in a lone fen for a minute, not to sing through the keyhole of a lady's door, but to reach the 'uttermost ends of the Earth!'—to mount heaven, heaven, heaven! Those elements will *force* their way, spite of man or devil; not so the elements of mind! A thousand petty influences can resist *their* bias, nay, often the very conflict between themselves. Love happening to break forth will, though earthy and sensual, often overmatch love of fame till it faints, perhaps dies quite; or else the sacred love of fame, like a Hercules, will baffle this earth-born—exalt the giant in the air—deprive him of his revivifying Touch—and tower alone his survivor and conqueror. And how then?—to die like him in the pains of fire! I say, that the impulse of such natures is toward greatness; the impulse, alas! is indeed no boast. Whether it produced in *me* any results to be boasted,

judge :—*Ecce ego !* How great a man it has made *me*, you behold !—*me* here, astride of this fallen tree, over this glassy water—even such a glass shewing me my withered self—once hopeful, now hopeless—once a brother among five, now brotherless—still a father—still a husband. 'Thank God !' was on my lips, but *cui bono ?* rose instead ;—to myself, or others, *cui bono ?* Yet once ambition-stricken ever so,—once wishful, ever wishing,—even to the last—

'With many a cause to wish, yet fear to die.'"

I looked round for some black cloud in the beautiful fading sky, to account for this unusual loss of self-possession in our fellow-traveller, but saw none.

Just to get over the awkward pause in this unpleasant turn of our placid evening-talk, I asked how he reconciled his idea of having lived content as a Welsh farm-cottager with those lofty vague aspirations ?

"On this ground,—that, however, strong *at first*, they *are* vague. Never, I maintain, was grosser injustice done or falsehood asserted, than by those who ascribe all disappointment in such impulses to vanity. It *may* enter into these as it does into almost all our feelings ; but the staple material of most such life-embittering disappointments is the unsatisfied necessity

of sympathy. All men feel this, from the Villager who longs

> 'Around his hearth an evening group to draw,
> And tell of all he felt and all he saw,'

to the Poet, to the Astronomer, who detects a new world in space, even to the General who has extended the curse of this, and glutted mortality, and abbreviated even the brief term of man's life; all pant, each longs his 'group to draw,' whether of gazers at the night heaven, or listeners, or even those no-thinkers who will shout, and fire cannon, and ring *peals* on their bells instead of tolling them, for tens of thousands of their poor brothers dead.

"But is the social man, who, in a solitude finds food for wonder or admiration, and fondly thinks 'This is something to tell my wife or my family,' and perhaps travels quicker home to unload his mind of its fulness, is he all self-conceit, therefore? When poor country boors congregate so eagerly at the smith's forge or alehouse, to pour out their thoughts, is each *solely* urged by vanity, is each only anxious to stand the hero among the rest? No such thing!

"A child takes a passion for books. The *youth* will be likely to try imitation, so the passion of authorship is formed. An author's

audience and an author's theatre is the Public, is the world, not the family and the fireside.

"His habits foster too a distaste for private tame society, a taste for solitude. Thus *his* 'group,' his desired circle of sympathy, is the listening world; if they applaud, no doubt better, but they must 'hear him!' or he is wretched. Why? *Why!* ask that family man, ask the humblest, the dullest; ask a child too little to know vanity, why the one pines if long excluded so as to hold no communion with the thoughts of that family, why the other runs so fast to tell another infant it has found a glass bead. Is sympathy nothing? That is applying the words 'all is *vanity*,' with a vengeance, and in a sense not designed.

"Very well, then; born *here*, shut from fatal literature, my yearnings, instead of dead authors, would have drawn round me living bosom-friends; the fiery ambition of the heart might have been blessed in winning a prize at a fair in some blue-eyed milk-maid's sight; my ambition of the mind been crowned in a beautiful offspring, my vague enthusiasm would have been tempered by my station, as a zenith sun by dense leaves and 'umbrageous glooms,' and thus have soothed and cheered, instead of maddening and driving me to a despondent,

lonely, loathsome despair. I might have been on this very ivy-covered trunk of a tree, feeling at this moment how beautiful, how grand is this mild mountain-scene, and this sunset painting it."

"And why not *now*, Doctor?" said I, "and if you cannot help 'gnawing your own heart,' (excuse me) *now*, why might you not have equally pined for some wider field for your fancied powers, as now?"

"Because I should never have known their existence, perhaps; certainly never have devoted myself to fostering them—thus, the desire of perpetuating one's self and that hunger for sympathy, would have harmlessly spent itself on such a monument as a single tree in my children's children's field, on a little vanity of the social kind, in seeing my handiwork pleasing in the sight of my sons. What but the sense of powers unexerted, feelings unemployed, is it, that makes wretched even bird and beast in a cage? Bring down an eagle and chain him to the face of the common ground, where quadrupeds live happily; bury the quadruped in hollows under the ground, where the mole and myriads of creeping things enjoy themselves; would you wonder at the eagle's and the buried beast's impatience? Had they

speech, the bird would say, 'Would I had been born that dog, or even that hog;' and the beast, 'Would I had been born that mole!'"

"A poet might well breathe *that* wish," said the Major. "Nothing like your man-mole. He's the true man of the world, that has not a wish for blue sky or green earth, or a look for anything any way except the straight-forward; *pioneers* on, following his dirty nose with most laudable and never-resting zeal; *bores* on, till at last rises a great heap of dirt! but *yellow* dirt that may at last turn to a green tuft for young larks to breed and sing in:—in human dialect, a provision for children."

We strolled now toward our tents pitched in a deep cleft, that affords a romantic passage by a long ravine, from the side of the Ystwith to the profound mountain-abyss, as one may call it, all round clothed with forest, where the rivers Mynach and Rheidol thunder down the celebrated falls near the Devil's Bridge, and the Ystwith itself is rejoined.

"However, friend," said I, "your human sympathies are not dead yet, while you so curiously collect, as I'm told you do, the sentiments of the country you sojourn in, on politics, &c., then hurry away to England, peep and listen and pry about the Metropolis, thrust

your silent head within our august reformed Parliament (*'room'* no longer now, as Burdett *used* to call it, but) House—(I wonder he's so little in it *now* it's become no *room*, but a place for 'six hundred'—*gentlemen)* and listen to patriots, &c."

"Why not do that as well as nothing?" he replied, "did you never watch an hyena in some narrow cell of a vile lumbering waggon menagerie? Never lived such a busy poor devil in the gallies or treadmill (*our* torture according to law) as is that 'untameable *wyhenah!*' as the fellow calls him. First to this end of his cage, then to t'other, is his incessant leap; he wanting nothing of one or t'other, though, and staring at you all the while in the face, not with one touch of love though. It seems activity, scrutiny; it's nothing but an unbearable impatience. It's nothing but sleepless longing for full range of the free desert it was born to range. From London to Wales, from Wales to London, is *my* dance between *my* two prison ends; and my earnest watch, gentlemen, of your species, I mean ours, is that affectionate gaze."

"What! have you such rankling wrath against us all?"

"Wrath! not individually. That hyena would not, if out, I think stop to hurt you; but he feels he is not in his right place, and you *are*, and *you* look so *placidly* at him, in his dreadful restlessness! for such I think he exhibits. 'Tis a distressing spectacle.

"What is to me, the human hive, that astonishing wilderness of stone, those interminable looking streets? What pleasure to jostle in their ceaseless disorderly cavalcade of gay, mournful, fine, filthy, gorged, famishing, wine-empurpled, death-pale human beings, beings in close contact and startling contrast? where the little of poor comedy (even that none of it mine,) only serves to heighten the horror of so much foul and frightful and dismal tragedy? What, when considered apart from human kind, is that paragon of architectural wonders? An idly-sculptured quarry! And apart from man, I have long learned to look at it. 'My soul is sick of man,' may not even a man exclaim, and yet not confess misanthrophy? Thus, regarding London, I prefer the genuine granite of the quarry, not tortured into houses of men, nor even into 'houses of God,' often equally temples to vain glory. I prefer the green giant of the forest, not prostrated and distorted into

roofs or cornices; give me them in their ivy and overhung rock-rifts, where the owl and the wild creatures (dispossessed but for a season, but till London shall be an island-Palmyra) retain undisturbed possession."

NIGHT.

"And here I find them," pursued our declamatory hermit, looking up the now solemn rock-valley, and its own water already gilded with moonshine, and an owl that moment from the high hanging trees lifting her doleful voice, like a wild 'Amen,' then flitting over our tents.

"*Here* at least, however disconsolate, a man breathes more freely. He hugs himself at being in an *untroubled* solitude, escaped the anguish and the mockery of a thousand brothers, not one of whom will have an arm for his head to die upon; of ten thousand even tender hearts that have for *him* no tenderness—kindred in shape, alien to his nature; even the acute unable or careless to do justice to his merits or shew mercy to his faults.

"And so, returning to it lonely, as lonely I left this wild scene, (and truly now desiring *but* loneliness) its wild peace sooths me *awhile*. 'Had I *ever lived*,' I cry, 'had I not overslept my whole hot mid-day, in the dream of a heart-

fever, and waked to find but dull evening, I might have here known peace at least, and moralised less drearily!'

"My brothers!' I might say, 'you have done me justice—my brother-men, good night! With you, and for you I have lived; but now the evening of my existence is stealing on me, with its cool, its damp, its shadows, and I would fain now live a little to myself, awhile to Nature, as perhaps soon to live to God, and in his presence. It is better to be prepared, to listen for the calling voice in the stillness of woods, than to be astonished with it, as by a thunder-clap, in the forgetful revels of cities. As on this Ystwith side in this sweet valley, and in the green light of its guardian mountains, I observe preparations for the night; the sounds of the day growing few, those few faint and drowsy, the harmless man just finished folding his sheep, and no more to do ere he lie down, than look awhile at that beautiful sky, and listen the first owl's voice; his wife heard in doors singing their child to sleep, where father, mother, and child, will presently be sleeping together under that wild flowered roof, nothing else between them and the quiet starry heaven but some great green tree-bough; so let *me* too look *in doors*. 'Tis time to com-

pose my agitated bosom after the stir of life's day; to let contentious thoughts cease, and all these fierce wishes, hopes, hates, fears, be lullabied to quiet, to deep sleep; as that crying child by its mother, so these by you, dear Nature! my ever-loved parent, ever beautiful to my eyes, young or old, however forgotten or insufficient to bless, in my 'days of sorrow and debasement vile.' Oh, it is well, it is needful, this gentle melancholy Twilight to man's life! this breathing, resting space, between two worlds; this soft break of the transition from the world of sun to the world of night—the grave!

"But is it with me alone that it grows late? Why did I bid goodnight to men? My brother, *Mankind!* greet me again; my way is your way, my nightfall yours. Oh, dying Mankind; what is the difference of a few years to Time? This 'little throb' in my breast, which, like the ticking of a timepiece, warns me that it grows late, by the many times it has struck death's note of summons, is equally striking on and on, in *your* 'mighty heart,' and though of the two hundred millions of units that compose your huge body, some are not so stricken in years as others, that is no more than my hair, my nails, the deciduous parts of

my body being still young. Notwithstanding that *you* too are in your evening. Oh! that you could be persuaded by a voice from these mountains, to also compose *your* terrible bosom jars, *believe* in the *ecstatic* pleasures which Nature in these scenes of green and deep quietness has in store for you, would you but desist from 'disquieting yourselves in vain!' Is all this declamatory poetry? Oh no! Does not reason's eye see your enormous corpse, O Mankind! lying outstretched ghastly across the earth, (equally so were its component particles millions of millions,) as clearly as I see my own, shrouded along a bed or lying in its nitch of that earth? Each one of your proud metropolis's shall as surely stand still as this little fountain; equally cease, for ever, from propelling the tide of life through your wide-reaching limbs!

"Good Heaven! then look, oh, look what is the vast result of all the dreadful deeds of that wild and mad and wicked life you have led, oh Mankind! See the end of all these frightful wars, those vast conspiracies of numbers, of even States; those cruel exterminations of men, women, and even poor innocents that *could* do no wrong; those blasphemous insults to Almighty God, of using His name in your worse than

wolfish, your devilish hunting out of your poor brothers, persecuting to death, aye, even *beyond!* such your frantic revenges, of your denouncements of even his soul, usurping God's own right, and affecting to thrust Him from his judgment-seat in Heaven; your dragoonings, your burnings alive, your diggings-up of even dead men's dust to scatter to the winds! I say *see* to what purpose were all these loathsome tragedies of blood, and fire, and death (and death eternal to your own souls *surely*, if you believe in their existence). Behold! whatever is, would have equally come to pass had not one of them been enacted! Your great conspirators of all ages have merely devoted their own limbs and heads and souls, to racks and scaffolds and God's hot displeasure, in vain; all were failures, like the many furious thrusts made by two combatants, who both survive, and if one *pass* of the hundred failures drew blood, 'twas but a scratch: *each* had one, it soon healed, they lived on and died! and were put with all their anger into one cold pit at last. Our existence meted out by moments, timed by this *punctum saliens*, and that hanging on a thread, we find all the 'movements' of all empires, all the conflicts of all the races of man, all prides of mind, all pomps of archi-

tecture, all glories below Heaven's own, all centering in the fate of such a small, short-lived, little-requiring thing of helplessness and clay, as *this!* O Man, the mystery! capable of so much good, effecting so much evil; *almost* an angel, *quite* a devil; how mournful is it for a *man* like yourself, correcting his expression to say (as was said of one monster-master of the world) — 'thing of dirt and blood!'"

"Do you call that *cheerful* moralizing, Doctor?" asked the Major, laughing.

"I say, Sir, I *might* have so moralized among my mountains. And if the world, as is too likely, would have gone on much the same with all my exhortations, why, still *my* small microcosm should have benefited. I might at least have composed *myself* to the rest of life's coming night, and 'rallied all life's energies to die.'

"Look at the reverse! look at a man bringing into solitude, and into his twilight, the turmoil of a beginning to live—rather the fury of never having made a beginning, and the despair of knowing it is too late!— could that peasant stand looking so quietly up at that evening star, or golden clouds, by his sheepcote, if he had but now started from his sleep of *all day*, and knew he

had done nothing on mountain or in dale, at home or abroad? I feel affright, no—for that implies hope, and I 've none—but a shock like it, on looking back at the utter waste of an existence, so agitated, yet so issueless! I am broad awake—in full health—strong in all but hope of heart; and the sleep of death is no more congenial to my mind's eye, conformably to the late hour of my being, than sleep at high day would be to a bridegroom with his longing, leaping heart, on the point of commencing a journey to meet his mistress, and bear her in triumph to the altar! So far from the hour, the cool, the tranquil,— this *fine* hour to happier men—to contented men, men who have acted their part, being one composing to all those agitations incident to the high noon of life, alas! it becomes only the more agitating, the more troubling, the later it grows, inasmuch as thus making assurance doubly sure, that the aim of existence is lost, that hurried away from the goal of my mind's hope, by a heart ever too headstrong for its governance, that runaway courser has carried me and that mind, wide of that goal as hell from heaven; that, besides a fatal wantonness of idleness, even in that mind itself, unaccountably made it dally with its own most

vehement longing, and pause long, look, sigh, and—do nothing.

> 'Jactura vitæ maxima est dilatio.
> Noluisse visus interim est, qui distulit.'

"It is a terrible torment to be *still*, in spite of reason, dreaming of *still* beginning day when it 's sunset, beginning to live when it is time to die. It is of small consequence what were a man's native propensities, when some long corroding feeling (or feelings,) like the iron worn till it eats into and is even bedded in the flesh, while it enters the soul, has wrought total revolution in the nature of the man. It is in vain that a good heart, as the phrase is, may have been born within him. A heart attached to nothing, is ever good for nothing; and how can it attach itself, even to those most tenderly anxious to heal it, if they could or knew how, while its canker worm gnaws day and night? Pain and wrath and disappointment, are a fearful phalanx against human sympathy. A man with these within him, as hoping nothing, loves nothing, or if he love anything, that feeling itself is pain, because he feels his disguised nature unable to prove that love, through the scowling mask in which misery veils his mind, and the worse, the *iron* one, with which it encases his heart. His secret cup of bitter-

ness is too full for him to allow one drop added by the most venial infirmity of those even attached to him. His sore sensitiveness can escape no rub, it overlooks nothing, forgives nothing; he grows tenfold implacable, impatient, reckless, restless, at the very season of his being that needs the peace and pensiveness of Autumn. Every added day, adding to the absurdity of hope—hope for the enactment of human actions, or winning some goal that *no* moralizing can render indifferent to him, (*reason* even though sound, is not always under our command,) every day sees him thus more perturbed in spirit, as he ought to be more tranquil. It is not to be believed but that such native character, as I have described by 'volcanic,' will some time have been hurried into much over which the mild evening of human decay ought to allow his sighing repentant—this too is denied him. He may feel remorse or regret for any one who may have suffered or fallen with him; but he feels still too wild a mourner to properly mourn for another. He may have lost what would have redeemed him, shed light over his dark, soothing over his turbulent career; its loss may have left him for ever to his own wild, wayward course, tossing further and still further out from earthly port

or heavenly ; yet feeling himself an utter wreck, the gentlest, purest recollection drifts behind, with the darkest and foulest ! undistinguished in the storm and the sea on which he beats and beats, till the dawn breaking, sees its blueness freed of the grim ruin."

END OF FOURTH DAY.

THE

MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

FIFTH DAY.

ARGUMENT.

The Quaker and Doctor break away from Old English ground, and venture a moment on Classical,—hurried away by something of the Antique in a picturesque nook in Carmarthenshire, and venture to pick a quarrel with Antiquity and scold Augustus! A Tale.

MORNING.

From our Cave near Pymsant, Carmarthenshire.

NEAR the road which now connects the towns of Llandovery and Lampeter, about midway between, is the mountain of Cynvil Gaio. The country between those places is on the whole of sterile character—the wilder kind of naked sheep-walk predominating, but not excluding rich beauties of pastoral landscape. But this irregular mountain is itself a landscape, with its bold broken fronts richly carpeted with grass, and thus shining, fresh green,

even in summer-heats, through the boughs of ancient trees, *hanging* in the most grotesque attitudes all about, and preserving by their shade that perpetual pure shining of the vegetable carpet, so delicious to the eye. The huge stony and earthy entrails of the mountain's concave, which has been excavated in very remote times for ore, and thus presents both natural caverns and artificial (now romantic as the natural)—these ruinous-looking entrails yawn deep beyond and within these solemn wild green hanging bowers, formed by the heads of oaks, ashes, sycamores, and pines, and that floor of shelving verdure. Those granite vaults thus broken into with great apertures of black, and mouths of caves grand as Gothic arches with a night behind, are relieved beautifully by profusion of gorse flowers, the colour of gold, with their sun-flower hues, seeming to supply to that gelid darkness a less delicate sun-light of their own.

But as this spot is hereafter to be described in a Tale, when further glorified by the light of *heart*—as the summer of young love—as the "trysting place" of happy lovers—I have perhaps too far expatiated here.

Suffice it to say, then, that the numbers of sheep which the cool shade and grassiness at-

tracts thither, further beautify with the glimpsing moving whiteness of their fleeces, (there unsoiled with dust, or the dingy stain of the peaty or less pure ground,) this whole wild range of precipice, which conjures up in every mind that has ever heard of Theocritus, pleasant retrospective dreams of the ancient pastoral—*un*-sentimental as that was—of all we *fancy* in the classical golden age of imagination, much aided by those most ancient workings of the "old men," as those remote miners (supposed to be Romans) are called by the shepherds thereabouts. Moreover, with those recollections of the *Antique* of Pastoral, excited by the scene, it was pleasant waking in a country of *modern* pastoral so much more genial to the "poet's ever gentle mind." Theocritus was not half so true a *poet* in spirit as our Major, with his "high thoughts in a heart of courtesy;" for believe me he *has* high thoughts, lowly as is his bearing, and inured to a sort of pensive taciturnity of soul, if I may so speak. Neither were the situations of Virgil's shepherds half so truly Arcadian as ours,—for what has Arcadia to do with war and blood? And we think more of the detestable tyranny of Augustus—the lawless power—and the savage and iron-hearted exertion of that power built on

the brute force of his human armoury—the number of bloody hands — arms of ursine strength, legs to rush in onslaught, to run down brothers—serpent brains to circumvent, and hearts of stone to slaughter :—I say we think more of that renowned ruffian's insolent sufferance of his soldiers', his man-machines' wrong against the peace-loving poet, than of that mock mercy which redressed it. He restored *his* farm :—what bounty was that, seeing it was his own ? And how many wandered without where to lay their head ? Witness the very subject of his Pastoral. Why it is a mournful and choler-stirring tragedy, instead of a sweet pastoral ! Such was the train of thoughts which led us from Wales to Imperial Rome.

" He demanded of his sycophants their applause," said our Major, " when dying. For what ? the *Proscription* ? For the murder of the glorious Cicero ? For nameless abominations, effeminacy, and all moral infamy ? For the barbarous banishment, *worse* than murder, of a refined genius to a horrid desert, among poor mindless wild men, (far more refined in heart than his tormentor,) to tell to a stormy sea and a barbarous people of unknown tongue, the mercies of a tyrant and the glories of his

court? 'Oh! but he gave Virgil back his farm,' to secure a poet laureate for eternity! He bought eternal fame (at least the graces of fame) cheaply with a 'butt' of the juice of the poet's own vineyard—oh, brave Augustus! Oh, wise Posterity, to 'give him your *applause*,' because he demanded it, instead of one perpetuated curse, wide as earth, loud as sea, and eternal as its thunder! Napoleon would have died bloodless, and millions lived happily, that perished horribly, had you been so wise or so just, oh, blind Mankind! as to have made the blood-guilty infamous!"

But while I thus record one of our Major's heart-outbreaks, which sometimes (but very rarely) startle us, I forget to tell *where* I am recording it.

Know then that our tents stand pitched in this wild place, deep in one of those (now) green profound hollows, formed by the vast heaps that have been thrown out, in remote ages, in pursuing some ore, (presumed to have been silver) through so many levels as here show their yawning mouths — one of which forms a magnificent *cave*, at least, in which most coolly, (for the all-blue morning is already hot,) and stilly, and deliciously, here we all *sit* at breakfast. I might call it a grotto—it's

worth ten of Pope's !—for the weeds hang to a great length from the rude arch-mouth, which as we *sit* (mind ! we are quite at ease, though it 's all cavern stone,) has the precise look of a noble archway ruined. Then the exclusion of all but the sun-gilded sweet blue of the *highest* heavens —for we are high up—only waved across gracefully by the extreme top foliage of the grand grotesque trees growing all down the declivities below us, in amphitheatrical beauty, all open to the lower country, which we can peep at by advancing but a few steps to our grotto's threshold — what an *aerial* feeling — what an unworldly — it gives to our fancy ! We are literally *above* the world, and denizens of the morning-heaven, without having gained the wings of the wild birds which we envy so, in the smoke and " stir " of cities, and *stench* of mortality, living, dying, or dead. Meanwhile, how sweet to be *re-united,* or rather still held, to that world, by something so innocent, so beautiful, so pure, so fresh, as a bright green top-twig of an oak or beech, not long new clothed, on which a bird takes a swing, a flutter for a moment !—twitters us human owls in our bower, a note or two, and is away ! flickering across the blue, and over a void of vast profundity bottomed by lowing cows,

farms, fields, and river-azure winding, snake-like, through solitary fertility! For the wilder hills but serve to embosom sweeter lower hills in this delicious county.

DOCTOR.—You are or were a bit of a Grecian, Major. I warrant you 've some old duodecimo in your sack—I beg pardon, in your pocket—now. You must have remarked how *material* all the Greek poets are—one might doubt whether the picturesque of scenery ever was revealed to the *mind's* eye of their age, ever stole softening to the heart within, ever was the source of rapt and refining contemplation. Yet they must have had *taste* with so much civilization. However it happened, Greece seems to have expressed nothing, and Rome, even after Augustus and Virgil's day, nothing very striking in the way of sentiment, as connected with the glorious landscapes of their land. The "blue Egean" seems to have smiled as vainly on their stoical eyes as the blue heaven it reflected above.

MAJOR.—They were *all Utilitarians*, I suppose. I don't know what other reason."

DOCTOR.—Say rather they were the slaves of a "fierce democracy," that ———

[At this most ominous word from our Doctor's mouth, in this calm soft morning, on the

cool grass of a mountain's bosom, under huge grotesque roofs of tree-heads, all whispering peace, the shock was electrical. We all shuffled, stirred, muttered "fine day," something of "fishing," &c. but he happily forgot politics in romance soon after.]

——— "fierce democracy! Men were too *anxious* to enjoy heaven or earth, or anything but security of life and property. The *mind* must be attuned to such enjoyment, to conceive it. The wild orgies of banquets dispelled thought, and there was comfort in that. The happy 'citizen', the supremely blest man of a Grecian republic, was happy enough if he could escape spies, informers, public accusations, banishment, death, if a rich citizen; and if a citizen-beggar, was too *unhappy* to open a quiet bosom to Nature's breath and kiss, and his mind's eye to her smile. He was not even to travel without leave of his masters the people; he felt that he was but the carrier of his (so named) *own* money; it was all the people's! —he was to portion their wives, redeem their prisoners, bury their dead, provide their sacrifices, feast them sumptuously, feast their public guests and make them presents, bribe their spies—happy untaxed citizen of a republic!

QUAKER.—But the Romans ———

DOCTOR.—Well, the Romans, the *rural* Romans. Is it not a *bore* to be invited to the dispute of two boobies in piping with a third, a grave Midas of the sheepcote, sitting in judgment on the grand conflict, the pipe or a kid all the two regard, and the stupid noise they make, all the third listens to? Meanwhile, there 's a glorious Nature all before 'em, and they don't see her, and only *feel* through their sensualities, as when she gives them some water, or, or a great fat nanny-goat presents them her inguinal bosom—fah! of a most unseemly prominence—or a large apple falls plump on their foolish heads, and flattens their noses. Such a feeling as breathes in Byron's stanzas—

> "To walk alone, to muse by flood and fell—
> To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,"

&c., is not, I believe, expressed or intimated in the old Greek poets, and but left to obscure inference in the Roman. Even with all their beautiful allusions to retirement and sylvan beauty, as involving happiness, *peace*, such an *escape* as Virgil's seems the *kind* of happiness looked for, not exaltation or softening of soul, or amelioration of heart or character.

PARSON.—Oh, sir, consider the darkness of the heathen, poor things how could they "im-

agine" anything but "a vain thing" with such gods as *they* had, and no "*faith*" at all? How could those poor dear damned souls, I speak not profanely; how could those poor *born* lost reprobates, and doomed to die such, men denied the new birth, that never had but one birth a-piece, (that the filthy one, to sin, none to righteousness,) get *our* enlargement of soul under regeneration? *our* sublimity of tastes? *our, our* charities? *our* humilities? No, sir! They could not relish their country's charms! they couldn't hymn their country's faith, nor its oxen, nor its cows, nor its calves, nor its good things, nor anything that was—*its*—[Ezekiel here put himself in preaching attitude]—Sir! we know they now are where they don't like to be; and that *we*, that is, we, the Elect, feel ourselves safe, are *sure* to be in a better place soon; not *very* soon let's hope, neither. Don't be severe then, and expect their souls to have been as susceptible to such scenes, as *our's* under Christianity and charity. Charity covereth——

Doctor.—Very true, so let us not imitate them in their poor blind state, who, having *such* gods, as you truly say—who, looking up to that most beautiful blue kingdom of a Creator, as we do now,—unaccountably saw

nothing there, wise as they were, but horrible *men* armed with divinity, and deformed *beyond* man, with hideous passions and crimes! *They* looking up, saw God hunting prey there, (or rather hiding from man's vengeance *there* and hunting on earth,) their Jove hunting Innocence, to kill or to pollute. *They* saw Lust and Jealousy, and tyrannous Intolerance, and Revenge, torturing and violating and murdering! these were *their* divine examples! *We* see One Merciful Father, passionless, pure, who palpably discountenances all those petty insultings and triumphings of one soul over another in the dark, by subjecting *all* to one common task and fate, and man to one birth and term and death.

"How strange, then, that while *those* learnt, under such examples, and in *spite* of them, tolerance and backwardness to *judge* their brothers, calmly seeking light for their darkness by a common endeavour; while *they* good-humouredly '*dissented*' from each other over a supper of fruits, or walking in groves or meadows; *we*, with the pole star of *our* high examples—*we*, with that common sun, this common atmosphere, for all earth's creatures, before our reason's eye, to prove that our common Father, *our* God of smiles and mercy, is

no regarder of persons—*we* split ourselves into ten thousand fragmentary bodies, and devote severally, each the other, every mother's son of us, to the infernal gods!"

MAJOR.—So you see, Mr. Evans, excuse me, there must be some little mistake among us in this *family-bickering;* because, that way, as our Doctor observes, we are *all* d—d (to borrow your expression, Mr. Evans); and, though it may be wicked to say it, I never could bring myself to wish for such wholesale perdition as even large 'masses' of disembodied spirits. Why, only think now, what a lost heretic and condemned poor rascal, 'guilty death (eternal),' are even *you*, reverend sir, to a good Catholic! What a Christian dog, vile Giaour, Heaven-abandoned Nazarene, blasphemer of Allah's prophet, is that good Catholic, to the good Mahometan! What shocking, sacrilegious, omnivorous sinners are *all* those, devouring the most holy of brutes and sacred of insects, as we would a date or olive, and lapping up their precious blood, (in the form of gravy,) as we might cocoa-nut milk, to vast numbers of men, our Hindoo brethren! Consider, sir, how *we* ourselves might have been at this moment, talking about all that we, (*here* squatting on this mountain of Cynvil Gaio in

South Wales,) happily revere, had we been born in Constantinople, or on the banks of the Ganges!"

Our boys borrowed two spades from the pretty road-side public-house of *Pympsant* last night, and have already made some such excellent seats of sod, cut brick-fashion, near the mouth of our cavern, the *mine* of the "ancient men" that they are already mourning to leave them. I believe this has a little swayed our Doctor in the "motion" that we do here sit on all day, not adjourn at all,—a long parliament! Carried *nem. con.*

Hereupon we all called for a story, and anon a story came—"The Hermit Vicar," its name.

END OF VOL. II.

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